$3.75
(CANADA $4.75)

FIRST THINGS

OCTOBER 1999
NUMBER 96

WILLIAM A. DEMBSKI
Are We Spiritual Machines?

AMY A. KASS & LEON R. KASS
Proposing Courtship

GILBERT MEILAENDER
Still Waiting for Benedict

MARY ANN GLENDON
Rousseau & the Revolt Against Reason

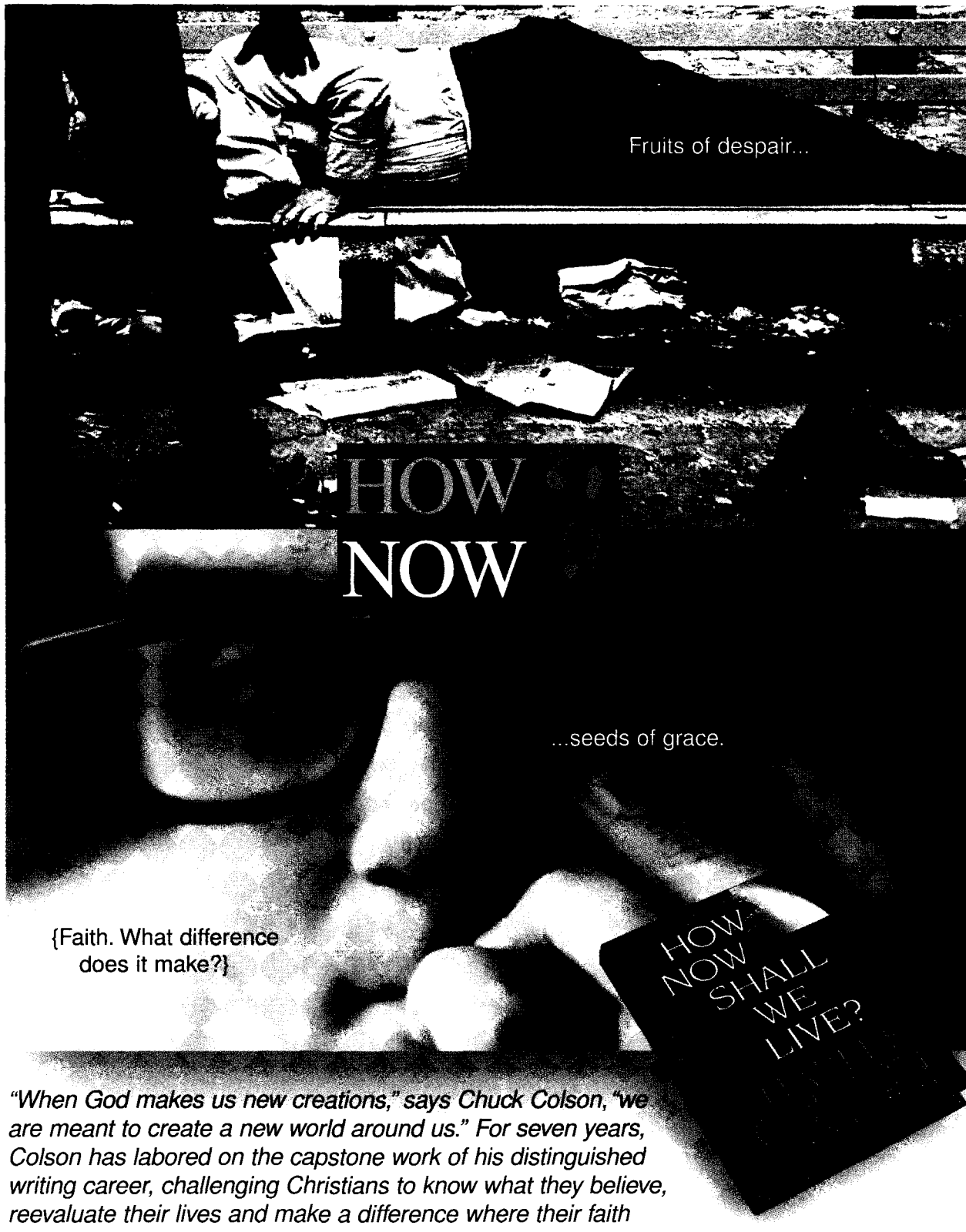
THE MILLENNIUM SERIES

ALSO: The Future of Once Protestant Britain
Russell E. Saltzman on Stem Cell Therapy • David Novak on Edith Stein
Marion Montgomery on Angelic Provincialism • Midge Decter on Germaine Greer • Daniel P. Moloney on Feminized Christianity • James Nuechterlein
Robert W. Jenson • Lucas E. Morel • Paul F. Swope • R. R. Reno

10
73361 64655 2

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
THE PUBLIC SQUARE
A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"When God makes us new creations," says Chuck Colson, "we are meant to create a new world around us." For seven years, Colson has labored on the capstone work of his distinguished writing career, challenging Christians to know what they believe, reevaluate their lives and make a difference where their faith encounters the world.

CHARLES COLSON'S "HOW NOW SHALL WE LIVE?"

TYNDALE

SEVEN YEARS IN THE MAKING. THE BOOK THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR WORLD.
NOW IN HARDCOVER AND AUDIO WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

OCTOBER 1999 • Number 96

CORRESPONDENCE 2 The Clinton era; Southern Baptists; the Christian university; wonkery and salvation; East-West reunion; correct exegesis; the myth of declension; Lutherans; *World* magazine

THIS TIME 11 *James Nuechterlein* Culture War No More?

OPINION 13 *Russell E. Saltzman* Two Boats, a Helicopter & Stem Cells

15 *David Novak* Edith Stein, Apostate Saint

17 *Marion Montgomery* Angelism and the Provincial Self

21 *Midge Decter* Liberating Germaine Greer

ARTICLES 25 *William A. Dembski* Are We Spiritual Machines?

32 *Amy A. Kass and Leon R. Kass* Proposing Courtship

42 *Mary Ann Glendon* Rousseau & the Revolt Against Reason

REVIEW ESSAY 48 *Gilbert A. Meilaender* Still Waiting for Benedict

BOOKS 57

Daniel P. Moloney The Church Impotent by Leon J. Podles

Robert W. Jenson Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism by T. J. Clark

Lucas E. Morel First Principles: The Jurisprudence of Clarence Thomas by Scott Douglas Gerber

Paul F. Swope Speaking of Abortion by Andrea L. Press and Elizabeth R. Cole

R. R. Reno Religious Reading by Paul J. Griffiths; . . . *and* Briefly Noted

THE PUBLIC SQUARE 78 A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life
Richard John Neuhaus
This Month: The Future of Once Protestant Britain, *etc.*
Poetry by *Lawrence Dugan* (24), *Mary Freeman* (41), *Samn Stockwell* (55)

Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *James Nuechterlein*
Managing Editor: *Matthew Berke*
Associate Editor: *Daniel P. Moloney*
Poetry Editor: *J. Bottum*
Editorial Assistants: *Sarah E. Hinlicky, Alicia Mosier*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service: *Publishing Management Associates*

First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $29 per year ($14.97 for students) by The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life, P.O. Box 3000 , Dept. FT, Denville, NJ 07834. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Email:** ft@firstthings.com. **Website:** http://www.firstthings.com. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 3000, Dept. FT, Denville, NJ 07834. 1-800-783-4903. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846. Copyright © 1999 by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. All rights reserved. Produced in the USA.

LICENSED TO LINZ, ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Midge Decter
Mary Ann Glendon
Stanley Hauerwas
Gilbert Meilaender
David Novak
Michael Novak
George Weigel

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Hadley Arkes
James Burtchaell
David Dalin
Thomas Derr
Jean Bethke Elshtain
James Finn
Ernest Fortin
Suzanne Garment
Robert George
Bruce Hafen
Carl F. H. Henry
Russell Hittinger
Leonid Kishkovsky
Glenn Loury
George Marsden
Max Stackhouse
Robert Louis Wilken

Correspondence

To Bomb or Not to Bomb

I hope I am not alone in my disappointment regarding Richard John Neuhaus' analysis of the imbroglio in Yugoslavia ("The Clinton Era, At Home and Abroad," Public Square, May).

The justifications offered by NATO and President Clinton for the Kosovo bombings certainly merit "robust skepticism"—but completely to ignore those justifications (as Father Neuhaus does) seems rather too robust. Fr. Neuhaus writes throughout as if we bombed Serbia on behalf of the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army. Indeed, thanks to NATO's bungling, an independent Kosovo may now be inevitable. This has never been policy, however; Western governments have adamantly insisted that the most the Kosovars could expect was a return to their autonomous status within Yugoslavia. The Rambouillet negotiations guaranteed Serbia's continued sovereignty over its "symbolic heartland"—an ascription that merits equally robust skepticism, by the way.

In the meantime, Slobodan Milosevic used Albanian separatism as an excuse to continue his campaign for an ethnically pure Serbia through murders and mass expulsions. This is the official principle behind NATO intervention—not that "Albanian rebels have a moral right to Kosovo," but that the countless Kosovar Albanians who are not violent rebels have a moral right to their lives, bodies, and homes. Of this, there is barely a whisper in Fr. Neuhaus' piece.

Joel Hafvenstein
San Diego, CA

Richard John Neuhaus' commentaries are normally so insightful and wide ranging that it was a shock to see his confused and misleading comments on the Kosovo crisis.

My ethnic background is Irish-American. I have no Albanian blood. I was a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* for twenty-eight years, and in that time was called upon to write about the plight of American citizens imprisoned in Yugoslavia.

Father Neuhaus questions why the U.S. is taking the side of Albanian Muslims against Serbian Christians and adds, "Kosovo is the symbolic heartland of Serbia, and Serbs are not willing to surrender lands that have been their ancestral homes for many centuries." Why Albanians are in Kosovo is ignored as if insignificant.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the Slavs began their incursions into the Balkan Peninsula in the sixth century A.D., some 1,600 years after the Albanians got there. This is standard world history. The Serbs are descendants of these Slavs. By the end of the seventh century, the *Encyclopedia* states, "the lands of the Albanian-speaking people were reduced to present-day Albania, Kosovo in Yugoslavia, parts of western Macedonia, and northern Greece."

Fr. Neuhaus says that "the U.S. is on the side of the Kosovars who want to break away from Serbia and establish an independent state." The modern facts are these: Tito recognized that Kosovo was primarily Albanian. In his reorganization of Yugoslavia after World War II, Tito designated Kosovo "an autonomous region" with mostly Albanian officials within the Republic of Serbia. Yugoslavia under Tito was a federation of republics, including Croatia, Montenegro, and Slovenia. During the 1970s and 1980s, Kosovar activists campaigned to have Kosovo designated a republic *within the Yugoslav federation* like the other republics.

In the mid-'80s, Slobodan Milosevic saw a chance to become dictator of Yugoslavia, following Tito's death, in effect by playing the race card, i.e., inciting the Serbs to hate the Albanians in Kosovo.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As the Albanians in Kosovo became more and more oppressed, the inevitable took place and some young Kosovars rose up. They formed the Kosovo Liberation Army and began to fight against Serbian authorities. The KLA was very small. They reminded one of the violent Black Panthers in the U.S. in the 1960s. The Kosovo independence movement was also relatively weak, comparable, in a way, to persistent but weak calls for an independent black nation in the U.S. But Milosevic seemed determined to make the movement grow through persecution. Imagine the U.S. Army being called out to expel all blacks from the U.S. In smaller terms to fit a smaller nation, that is what Milosevic did.

Fr. Neuhaus asks, "Why not take up the cause of the Kurds? Their claims are more persuasive than those of the Kosovars."

Well, some day, perhaps, the nations of the earth will be capable of riding to the aid of vulnerable people anywhere on the globe when gross injustice breaks out. This is well in the future. For the present, the movement to expand recognition of human rights depends primarily upon Europe and the United States. Europe and the United States cannot redraw the boundaries for the Kurds or militarily protect the Christians in Indonesia and India and the Sudan or prevent genocide in Rwanda. The world has not progressed that far.

But if the human rights movement is to gradually expand rather than fall backwards, Europe and the United States must defend human rights in the core, namely, in Europe and the United States. This is where the human rights movement began. This is where it must be maintained if the movement is to go on.

Jerry Crimmins
Chicago, IL

Richard John Neuhaus sympathetically cites a statement that "U.S. force is once again on the side of the Muslims against the Christians." It is difficult to believe that he does not once in his piece mention the words "ethnic cleansing." Ethnic cleansing is the campaign of murder, forced evacuation, and destruction pursued by the Serbs to remove the ethnic Albanians. To attempt to put a stop to this atrocious campaign is not an unworthy objective. The fact that this campaign and all of its reported horrors are executed by the forces of a purportedly Christian nation is cause for grief in Christendom, and certainly no reason to question why we do not support the perpetrators. Nor is it the first time the Serbs have viciously moved against their non-Christian neighbors. Nor are they the first reputedly Christian nation to forcibly remove, with abundant atrocities, non-Christians from their midst. We have been there too often and our Savior's name has thus been too often defamed.

Donald Berghaus
Tucker, GA

I was quite surprised by Father Neuhaus' remarks concerning the United States taking the Muslim side in the war against Serbia. Is he unaware that a fair number of Albanians are, in fact, Roman Catholic, and that Serbian militia destroyed a Franciscan monastery and held the Catholic bishop of Pristina against his will? I am deeply disappointed that in his opposition to current policy Fr. Neuhaus is willing to serve as a Serbian apologist (the "Muslim side" is the staple of Serbian propaganda). Too bad violent antipathy led him to ignore the fate of Albanian Catholics.

Joseph Heim
California University of Pennsylvania
Clairton, PA

RJN replies:
The response to the comment on the U.S.-NATO war in Serbia has been strongly positive, but these letters raise questions that should be taken seriously. We can stipulate, as Mr. Hafvenstein indicates, that Milosevic has done very wicked things and that the intervention had, among other aims, a humanitarian goal. The intervention did not achieve that goal (protecting the Kosovars from ethnic cleansing) and may have contributed to its defeat. My comment dealt with the classical criteria of "justified war," and punishing the Serb people for what their leader had already done does not qualify as "just cause." Of course Kosovo is ancestral homeland to both Serbs and Kosovars.

Mr. Crimmins' useful recounting of the past underscores that we were dropping bombs into more than a thousand years of passionately tangled history. The analogy between the KLA and the murderous Black Panthers may also be apt in that, as of this writing, the KLA is engaged in the "reverse ethnic cleansing" of Serbs. I do not look forward to a time in which, in the name of human rights, an imperial U.S. with a European sidekick presumes to redraw national boundaries and otherwise rule the world. That is, in my judgment, an exceedingly dangerous vision that would overturn international relations as "politics among nations" (Hans Morgenthau), and it is my distinct impression that those who advocate it have not thought through its implications.

Mr. Berghaus is undoubtedly right that many shameful things have been done in the name of Christianity.

To Mr. Heim: There are a substantial number of Albanian Catholics also in New York, and I am well aware of the plight of those caught up in the conflicts in Yugoslavia. It is not only Serbian propaganda, however, that speaks of the "Muslim side." To cite but one example, Fawaz A. Gerges, professor of Middle East studies at Sarah Lawrence, celebrates the U.S.-NATO attack in the *International Herald Tribune*: "For the first time, the United States and its European allies, whose cultures are primarily based on Christianity, are going to war against a sister Christian

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

country, Yugoslavia, to defend a persecuted Muslim community."

A more notable example is the address of National Security Advisor Samuel (Sandy) Berger to the American Muslim Council in Washington, D.C., on May 7. "American Muslims," he said, "have a critically important role to play as a bridge between the United States and the Muslim world. From the time President Clinton took the oath of office, this Administration has reached out to the Muslim community worldwide." International terrorism, said Berger, "is a problem many Americans mistakenly link to Islam." "Perhaps most clearly, Bosnia and Kosovo have refuted the claim that Islam and the West are locked in a clash of civilizations." The clash of civilizations refers, of course, to Samuel Huntington's important book by that title. Berger asserted that, if the U.S. works "hand in hand with our Muslim partners, . . . we can crush the clash of civilizations theory once and for all." He concluded his speech with this: "Nothing mankind has conceived of is more profound than our soaring capacity to imagine a divine being—and nothing has done more to divide us than religion. Millennium or no millennium, the time has come to face up to our oldest problem." In sum, the suggestion that the U.S.-NATO attack on Serbia was also related to larger questions of Christianity and Islam in the world is not the invention of Serbian propagandists.

Baptist (and Other) Ghosts

Timothy George offers a fascinating and insightful article on "Southern Baptist Ghosts" (May). His historical analysis is enlightening and profitable. However, his summary dismissal of "confessionless Christianity" seems to me to be superficial and prejudicial. ("But confessionless Christianity poses an even greater danger. Forsaking the distilled wisdom of the past makes every man's hat his own church.")

First, relying on creeds or confessions to alleviate the "every man's hat his own church" issue has its own complications. There is still the problem of who is going to distill the wisdom of the past. I suspect many would disagree with Mr. George as to which particular confessions are orthodox and which are heretical. "Confessionalism" still requires, as does confessionless Christianity, individual assent. In the end "every man's hat his own church" doesn't go away. Rather than debating over New Testament doctrine, we simply pick and choose which creed or confession suits us (not unlike the postmodern process of determining morality). After all, who determines which "confession" is universally true? With well over 1,500 denominations in the United States and more emerging every day, it appears that confessionalism has not alleviated the problem supposedly inherent in a confessionless Christianity.

Second, confessionalism, by its very nature, raises several problems in relation to the New Testament. When Scripture and the "distilled wisdom of the past" contradict each other, which side do we choose? Which do we modify, the Bible or later creeds? What are we then saying of the one that is modified? And what do creeds and confessions imply about God's desire and/or power to communicate his Truth to mankind once and for all (Jude 3)?

Earlier in his article, Mr. George employs the Kentucky Baptists' argument that "If there be any divine warrant for a church there is a divine warrant for a creed." With this argument and with his statement above, the implication appears to be that those who are anti-confessional open the door to religious subjectivism. However, many who reject confessionalism do not reject the need for a "creed." Even Alexander Campbell did not. They simply ask, "*Which* creed should dictate to the Church?" Their answer is one: the Bible. That may appear naive, simpleminded, or ahistorical to Mr. George. In my own honest wrestling with the issue, it has not been so easy to dismiss.

Jeffrey S. Young
Winston-Salem, NC

Timothy George's article "Southern Baptist Ghosts" continues a popular straw-man argument against the soteriological teachings of Alexander Campbell and the Churches of Christ. Concerning Alexander Campbell he writes, "He taught a doctrine that sounded very much like baptismal regeneration." Then later he concludes that "no Southern Baptist . . . would accept Campbell's regenerative view of baptism." The reader is left with the obvious impression that not only Alexander Campbell but also "his newly formed Churches of Christ" teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

I would suggest that the reason why many have understood the Churches of Christ to teach baptismal regeneration is because our view of faith, in contrast to Protestant understandings, is actually quite similar to the Catholic view as stated by Joseph Fitzmyer in *Pauline Theology: A Brief Sketch.* As long as sincere and well-educated individuals continue to employ different definitions of faith, ships will continue to pass in the night.

To summarize the understanding of those within the Churches of Christ, the gospel is the good news that everyone who believes in Jesus has the right to become a child of God by being born of God (John 1:12-13). The ground of salvation is therefore Jesus. Jesus died so that his blood could establish a new covenant relationship with God and bring the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10:16-17).

The issue of salvation and the identity of the Church revolves around whether God recognizes one in covenant with Him through Jesus. The obedience of faith which causes one to enter into Jesus' covenant and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

receive the promise of the new covenant (the forgiveness of sins) comes through responding in faith to the gospel by having one's body washed with water (Hebrews 10:22; Acts 22:16; 2:38). Thus salvation is by faith and those who do not respond with this obedience of faith in the gospel will not be saved (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17; Hebrews 5:9). Salvation, therefore, comes to those who trust in Jesus and in his blood (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 3:25).

The Churches of Christ do not teach baptismal regeneration, which is the doctrine that the mere application of water saves. Instead, we understand baptism to be a confession of faith in Jesus, which is demanded by the gospel.

(The Rev.) Barry Newton
Central Church of Christ
San Jose, CA

Timothy George's essay "Southern Baptist Ghosts" contains a number of errors with regard to Alexander Campbell and the Restoration movement.

1. Mr. George states that Campbell led many Baptists to join his "newly formed Churches of Christ." In fact, Campbell's churches went by the name Disciples of Christ. The Churches of Christ were one of several frontier movements that later became part of the larger Restoration movement, but they were not Campbell's churches.

2. Mr. George states that Campbell opposed the use of church organs as a matter of doctrine. While opposing organs, and other formal church practices, Campbell did not consider his opinion to be a matter of doctrine. Mr. George has taken a later controversy, in which some of the southern churches made banning church organs a matter of doctrine, and attributed the controversy to Campbell.

3. Mr. George states that Campbell was a "biblical literalist" with "a precise blueprint for church order and belief." In fact, the problem contemporary Baptists had with Campbell was his liberalism on such matters.

4. Mr. George states at one point that Campbell "sounds" like he believes in baptismal regeneration, then later says that Campbell did believe the doctrine. Campbell did not.

5. Mr. George states that "it is not uncommon to find Baptist and 'Christian' churches still facing one another across town squares" in Kentucky and Tennessee today. One must ask why he puts quotation marks around the word Christian. Baptist churches, of course, call themselves Baptist churches, while Christian churches call themselves—surprise—Christian churches. Just so your readers understand what is going on, imagine Mr. George referring to "Baptist and 'Catholic' churches." Also, his reiterated use of the word Campbellite is the social equivalent of referring to Catholics as Papists.

Jefferson White
Hilliard, OH

Although I appreciate the insightful analysis that Timothy George gives in his article on the underlying movements shaping the current debate between "fundamentalists" and "moderates" in the Southern Baptist Convention, he nonetheless fails to mention the fundamental cause of schism in the SBC and Protestantism in general: *sola scriptura.*

Cardinal Newman rightly pointed out in the nineteenth century that *sola scriptura* as the foundational principle of Protestantism is in essence the affirmation of private judgment in regard to divine truth. Scripture interpreted outside of holy tradition becomes mere opinion. The moderates of the SBC justly accuse the fundamentalists of imposing their opinions on their fellow brethren while the moderates feel free to define their own religion.

It is hard to see a way out of the current SBC muddle except to appeal to the living authority of the holy tradition of the Church. This Southern Baptists will be unwilling to do. The Southern Baptists are undoubtedly traveling the same path as their Protestant brethren, where there are as many schisms as there are religious opinions.

David Bowden
Easley, SC

Timothy George replies:
For the Protestant reformers, whose theology is reflected in historic Baptist confessions, *sola scriptura* did not mean *nuda scriptura.* They believed in the coinherence of Scripture and Tradition. What they objected to was the positing of Tradition as a second source of authority alongside, or even above, Holy Scripture. During the past fifty years, this same point has been made vigorously by many Catholic scholars. Significantly, Scripture and Tradition has emerged as a major theme in our ongoing ECT (Evangelicals and Catholics Together) discussions.

Words like Tradition and magisterium do not sit lightly on Baptist ears. But we too have an authoritative teaching office, located not in an infallible papacy, but in the congregation. I am a great admirer of Cardinal Newman, as I am of Cardinal Ratzinger, but I do not see that the existence of a hierarchical magisterium has prevented many Catholics from "defining their own religion." Indeed, if I read the current scene correctly, some Roman Catholics, including certain theologians and teachers, regularly ignore the magisterium, staking out positions that would make even most (if not all) liberal Baptists blush.

Jeffrey S. Young poses the important question of how one distinguishes a true confession from a false one. His answer to this dilemma is simple: let's just say the Bible is our creed and be done with it. But this does not get us very far, for Marcion, Arius, and Pelagius, to name only three notable heretics, all appealed to the Bible to support their ideas. In the face of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

such challenges, the church of historic orthodox Christianity, the church of the Great Tradition, if you like, found it necessary to articulate the faith in the language of the creeds. In doing so, they were not adding something alien or different to the apostolic deposit of truth. The new language of the creeds was born out of the stubborn intention of the church to be faithful precisely to the biblical kerygma.

It is the task of the theologian to look for, and expect to find, the apostolic witness in the documents of the church. But we are not slavishly bound to these doctrinal formulae. We hold them accountable to Holy Scripture and revisable in the light thereof. The "catholic substance" of the faith once for all delivered to the saints is balanced by the "protestant principle" of the church reformed and ever reforming on the basis of the Word of God.

Karl Barth once compared the creeds and confessions of the church to the guardrails that border the narrow roads of the Swiss Alps. Only a fool with suicidal tendencies would want to drive across the Alps without the guardrails. But it would be equally foolish to mistake the guardrails for the road; when we start driving on the rails, disaster is imminent. To push the analogy further, Jesus Christ is the Road (cf. John 14:6 and St. Augustine's depiction of Christ as "*Patria et via ad patriam*"), and the Bible, as interpreted by a covenanted congregation of baptized believers in continuity with the apostolic witness, is the light (cf. Psalm 119:105) by which we are able to see clearly both the road on which we travel and the guardrails that protect us from dangerous deviations.

I am pleased to be informed by Barry Newton and Jefferson White that Alexander Campbell believed that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, not by Jesus Christ *and* water, or Jesus Christ *and* good works. I am aware of a growing number of Campbell's latter-day disciples who do hold to this more evangelical view, though they are frequently criticized by other members of their fellowship for having departed from Campbell's teaching. The point of my essay was that Baptists who historically rejected (what they took to be) Campbell's cognitive ritualism are today in danger of falling into the same trap by practicing a decisionistic evangelism which mitigates the decisive role of the Holy Spirit in conversion.

I acknowledged that the word "Campbellite" was a nickname coined in 1832. As it is my custom to call others what they themselves wish to be called, I have no interest in foisting this anachronistic term on anyone who does not wish to bear it. However, long before "Churches of Christ" became a denominational tag, it was used as a term of self-designation by various biblicist and restorational groups, including the Baptists, as can be seen from a letter of 1650 issued in the name of the "Churches of Christ in London, Baptized." "Churches of Christ," after all, is a good biblical term for the new covenant people of God (cf. Romans 16:16).

Christianity and the Christian University

Toward the end of his thought-provoking article "A Christian University: Defining the Difference" (May), Mark R. Schwehn expresses his opposition to certain of Cardinal Newman's views developed in his classic work, *The Idea of a University*. It seems to me, however, that his disagreement with Newman is based on Professor Schwehn's failure to distinguish the supernatural character of the kind of charity and humility Cardinal Newman had in mind from what Prof. Schwehn refers to as the charity and humility practiced by many outside Christianity. It is precisely the fact that the supernatural virtues are based on specifically Christian belief and motivation that spells the difference between what Cardinal Newman refers to as the virtues of charity and humility and the virtues of the same name that Prof. Schwehn finds prevalent and admirable in non-Christian contexts.

Following St. Augustine, Cardinal Newman would claim, for example, that charity in its authentic meaning is based on Christian revelation and implies a partaking in Christ's love for others, a love which burns for their eternal salvation, a love which is willing to suffer and die for it, a love which also sees Christ in each individual and responds to his needs accordingly.

To participate in Christ's love for others clearly implies that one believes in Christ and is convinced that it is through him and with him that true charity can be lived and practiced. A naturally kind, loving, and helpful attitude toward others is not the same thing, even though Christ's charity will also include these traits.

In the same way, humility in the Christian sense implies a personal confrontation between God and creature, a creature who recognizes he is "but dust and ashes," an awareness that is in no way depressing because he knows that the One who is Love "has first loved us." Such humility is not simply a form of modesty, a non-arrogant attitude toward others and a willingness to admit one's own limitations.

Prof. Schwehn's statement that he doubts Christianity has a singular claim upon the virtues of charity and humility blurs the distinction between natural and supernatural virtues. The supernatural character of Christian charity and humility is the character to be emphasized as most relevant to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimension of a distinctly Christian university.

Prof. Schwehn also disagrees with Cardinal Newman's insistence that "the knowledge that is the proper object of study of a university is 'good for its own sake.'" He considers that it is necessary for the university to pre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pare students for their life's work. I think we should be cautious about advocating studies at a university that are directly oriented toward work.

Like Pascal, who wrote that he was not a pragmatist because he went further without it, Cardinal Newman thought that if an object had an intrinsic value independently of its usefulness, it would inevitably—in a superabundant manner—fructify beyond itself. Many of my own students have told me over the years that even though they never intended to make a career of philosophy, their philosophical studies have been invaluable in whatever domain they turned to. It is precisely because truth and the study of truth is desirable for its own sake that it is so enriching in every domain of life. If nothing is worth doing for its own sake, then nothing is worth doing.

Alice Von Hildebrand
Professor Emeritus
Hunter College
New York, NY

Mark R. Schwehn has done a fine job laying out some defining differences of a Christian university. He will have to forgive me, therefore, for taking issue not with the major points of his thesis but rather with a parenthetical remark regarding the evangelizing role of a Christian university. Professor Schwehn states that since Valparaiso is a university, and not a church, "we are not about the business of the salvation of souls." I find such a statement unfortunate. In my understanding, Christians are always and everywhere occupied with the salvation of souls, at very least as the implicit horizon of their activities. How much more so a university that sets itself up as specifically Christian?

When applied to an enterprise such as a university, the title "Christian" suggests that the institution sees itself as somehow continuing or participating in Christ's own mission. Whatever other elements may have been present in Christ's work on earth, "the business of the salvation of souls" was smack-dab at its core. All truly Christian endeavor, it would seem, bears this transcendent character. A Christian university pursues, certainly, the intellectual formation of its students, but if such formation is seen outside the context of eternal salvation—to which it presumably contributes—it fails roundly in its ultimate purpose.

These reflections may be construed as nitpicking. Perhaps Prof. Schwehn would reply that he was referring to the university's material objective, imparting knowledge, as distinct from a church explicitly engaged in preaching the gospel. But it would seem that the deterioration of many Christian universities has derived from a loss of their specific identity as works of evangelization. When a Christian university forgets that it is first and foremost in "the business of the salvation of souls," it might as well strike the name "Christian" from its charter. This transcendent objective can never be subordinated to any lesser good.

Perhaps the fundamental problem lies in positing such a stark dichotomy between church and university. Aren't Christian schools and universities, Christian hospitals and orphanages, natural offshoots of the Christian church? Isn't education itself particularly suited to the mission of the church in a way that other activities can never be? Isn't that why we have hundreds of Christian schools and no Christian grocery stores, pharmacies, or restaurants? If we limit the life of the church to Sunday services and whatever transpires within church precincts, we have accepted a very shabby notion of church.

(The Rev.) Thomas D. Williams
Rome, Italy

Wonks and Other Christians

I enjoyed Daniel P. Moloney's "'Saving' the Poor" (May). As one who helped to organize and moderate the two conferences about which he wrote, I found his descriptions of what many of our speakers said to be accurate. He is right that a "growing number of church leaders, social scientists, policy analysts, and government officials" are exploring the extent, efficacy, and replicability of faith-based approaches to crime, poverty, and other social ills. Anyone who thinks that this interest is confined to more conservative individuals and institutions like the Manhattan Institute (sponsor of one of the conferences discussed by Mr. Moloney) should read the Spring 1999 issue of the *Brookings Review*, coedited by E. J. Dionne and myself, with a cover and lead essay asking "What's God Got to Do with the American Experiment?"

Mr. Moloney is wise to warn against "a dangerous tendency of sociologists to talk about religion in purely instrumental terms." (By "sociologists," I gather, he means not just card-carrying members of that academic discipline but social scientists and policy analysts generally.) He is also right to tweak my tribe for sometimes speaking "in a combination of euphemism and political jargon" that "tends to make loving your neighbor sound like a military briefing, and can sometimes lead to sloppy generalizations."

Mr. Moloney might have noted, however, that I opened one of the conferences with a prayer. Anyone who heard and heeded Eugene Rivers, Tom Lewis, Amy Sherman, or several of our other non-policy-wonk speakers would be in little danger of reducing "the supernatural to the natural," or of encouraging "policy elites to believe that religion is only for the down-and-out." Ditto for anyone who heard and heeded most of our featured wonks, including Dr. David Larson, a pioneer in (forgive me!) faith-factor research on (mercy!) public health outcomes.

Finally, I admire "the theologian" and "the philosopher" in Mr. Moloney, who expresses "some doubts about the emphasis on generic religion," be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lieves that "the successes of FBOs are probably due in large part to something on the human side," and bets "that those who practice traditional religions have on average a better understanding of human nature than the nonreligious." So, let's document what we mean by "the successes," specify what we mean by such phrases as "something on the human side," and test our bets about what probably works, and under what conditions.

As Aristotle observed, it is the mark of the educated mind "to seek precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits." As Pope John Paul II has recently reminded the world, any apparent conflicts between faith and reason, science and spirituality must be based on false understandings of God's indivisible truth. So, with Mr. Moloney, let us all be patient, because even the "sociologists" are starting to get it—and get Him.

John J. DiIulio, Jr.
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA

Daniel P. Moloney replies:
John J. DiIulio, Jr. is one of our national treasures, and I am pleased that he appreciated the article and finds my criticisms constructive, or at least worthy of response. As E. J. Dionne noted in his column in the *Washington Post*, with George W. Bush and Al Gore pushing private and religious charities as our best hope for helping the underclass, the presidential elections promise to be painfully jargon-ridden unless we invent a more poetic way of describing these programs that is also sensitive to the nuances of this particular intersection of religion and public life.

I do want to clarify something that Dr. DiIulio seems to have misunderstood about my article. I made two observations about the conferences: 1) most speakers crafted their research to persuade academics, government officials, and other skeptics that, according to most measures of success, religiously motivated charities work better than other forms of public and private assistance; and 2) most speakers seemed to believe, at least privately, that religiously motivated charities are successful because of God's direct intervention. It seems to me that in the interest of building a coalition, activists from several religious traditions blurred the differences between them in order to promote "faith" in general. By doing so, they hope to create the public conditions favorable to all religiously motivated initiatives. That's good politics, if bad theology. Dr. DiIulio quotes from the end of the article, where I worried about the consequences of taking this *generic* "faith" too seriously. I did not suggest that any of the speakers were less than committed to their *specific* religious traditions. Because "faith in general" is too attenuated and theologically incoherent to be the actual reason for the results of "faith-based" charities, I am heartened by Dr. DiIulio's "Aristotelian" leanings. I encourage him and his colleagues in their efforts to discover causes more immediate than divine intervention for the success of programs that are helping America save God's poor.

The Road to Reunion

Lawrence A. Uzzell seems to be very unhappy with Moscow Patriarch Alexis II's unwillingness to make any "concessions" to the Roman Pope, whom he keeps "at arms length" ("Letter from Moscow," May). He very naively thinks that the Orthodox people's objection to Roman Catholicism is mostly connected with memories of the Polish army, which centuries ago occupied Moscow, and that there are very few theological reasons for this animosity.

The more tolerant attitude of the Russian people toward Protestants is easy to understand. Protestants are perceived to have a very diverse and alien theology as compared to Russian Orthodoxy, and are therefore less of a threat. Roman Catholicism, by contrast, has a theology and tradition that is not so dissimilar to Orthodoxy.

Mr. Uzzell is quite right when he states that "it might be better for a meeting between Pope and Patriarch not to take place," because a true union could be achieved only through the Roman Pope's renouncement of the heresies that have accumulated during one thousand years of separation. He would have to repent of these and return to Orthodoxy.

This might sound very harsh, but Christ's Church, which is the only unique Body of Christ, cannot accept erroneous teachings and compromises in order to achieve a false union.

V. Schatiloff
Oradell, NJ

Getting Exegesis Right

I enjoyed Edward T. Oakes' fine review essay, "Nature as Law and Gift" (May). In trying to unravel "Judaism's Euthyphro problem," however, he puts Abraham's interrogation of God's justice toward Sodom *after* his unquestioning submission to God's command to sacrifice his son. In Genesis, it actually comes more than three chapters before (18:22-33, 22:1-19). We must assume that during the interim Abraham has learned something, whether or not the lesson is also clear to us.

J. Budziszewski
Departments of Government and Philosophy
University of Texas
Austin, TX

Edward T. Oakes' pen slipped when he wrote that Saul, in belated obedience to Samuel, killed Agag king of the Amalekites. Samuel himself killed Agag (1 Samuel 15:33).

Milton Himmelfarb
White Plains, NY

Edward T. Oakes replies:
J. Budziszewski is, of course, right in pointing out that Abraham interrogates God's justice toward Sodom *before* God makes the issue all the more agonizing for Abraham by calling

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upon father to slay son. But the "disputation" over the fate of Sodom takes place *after* God establishes his covenant with Abram, indeed after Abram receives his new name, Abraham. (I had meant "later" to refer to Abraham's new covenantal status, but neglected to notice that I was in fact referring to a time subsequent to the sacrifice of Isaac.) I, too, presume that Abraham learned something new—even disturbing—about God, even with the memory of the fate of the Cities of the Plain fresh in his mind, but I now suspect that it was not a Kierkegaardian lesson that the father of monotheism drew from the episode atop Mount Moriah. From the Habermas scholar, William Rehg, I have begun to think that the real lesson of the story is not that Abraham is being called to renounce ethical categories, but rather that God is testing Abraham's trust in God's fidelity *to Isaac*: that is, can Abraham trust God's promise that He will be faithful in perpetuity to the boy whom God commands be named Isaac (Genesis 17:19)? In other words, God is not calling Abraham to renounce ethical categories but to trust in the covenantal promise to Isaac even *through* the command to sacrifice the very recipient of that selfsame Promise. "However provocative and instructive Kierkegaard's interpretation is *for us*," says Rehg, "for Abraham the problem isn't the injunction against murder but the apparent fact that God's command to sacrifice Isaac seems to break the promise [of Genesis 17:19], and make God untrustworthy."

To Milton Himmelfarb: The pen not only slipped, the brain fell. I recently taught this same passage to my Introduction to Religious Studies class, when we went through the passage line by line, and my eye still read "Saul" for "Samuel," a lesson in perceptual psychology if not in my powers of Old Testament exegesis. In any event, I have read, taught, and cited with profit enough books and articles from the Himmelfarb/Kristol clan that at least I can say that the sting of correction is assuaged by knowledge of its source; and, given the fine work J. Budziszewski does in First Things, I can say the same of him as well.

Myths and Realities

James Nuechterlein's theme in "The Myth of Declension" (May) seems to be, "Don't get exercised by the rantings and ravings of those Christian conservatives about moral decline in the society. They have been doing that in every generation since the 1640s." So we have, and as it turns out the evil consequences forecast of our society's conduct in the 1640s have come about in the 1990s. We enter the next century richer in goods and services than prior generations, but poorer in skills of learning and thinking and analyzing, poorer in understanding and living virtuous lives, poorer in spirit, poorer in all the matters for which God made us. The "myth" of declension? Not so mythical after all.

Mallory L. Miller
San Antonio, TX

Lutherans and Lutheranism

I wish to object to an item in the Public Square (May) concerning "a survey of 2,200 Lutherans" that purportedly reveals the painful dichotomy between "Lutheranism's constituting doctrine—justification by faith alone—and the reality that is Lutheranism." Reflecting on the Lutheran Brotherhood's study showing parishioners' general misunderstanding of Lutheranism, Richard John Neuhaus suggests that insistence upon this doctrine "by which the church stands or falls" continues chiefly for the maintenance of a probable minority of today's Lutheran theologians.

Analogously, would Father Neuhaus suggest that the results of the polls in the recent impeachment hearings should delegitimize the authority of the U.S. Constitution? Also, should actual practice of professing Catholics in violation of Church teaching supersede and invalidate that teaching on matters such as contraception, abortion, divorce, adherence and loyalty to all seven sacraments, etc.? Which is "the reality"—the misperception, misap-

Portsmouth Abbey School

A Coeducational Benedictine College Preparatory School

- 500 acre campus on Narragansett Bay
- Challenging curriculum offering extensive advanced placement courses, Marine Science, drama, arts, & more
- Complete interscholastic sports program
- Financial aid and merit scholarships available

"...to grow in knowledge and grace."
- Portsmouth Abbey School Mission Statement

For more information contact: Admissions Office, Portsmouth Abbey School
Portsmouth, Rhode Island 02871
Tele. (401) 683-2005 Fax (401) 683-6766
e-mail: admissions@portsmouthabbey.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plication, and malpractice, or the principles found in the Constitution and in Church precepts?

To carry the argument even further: Do the reprobate mind and practice of sinners obliterate and replace God's truth? And do those who insist God's Word is eternal and inviolable do so only to maintain their privileged positions in service to that Word? Of course not.

Thus, it follows that "the reality that is Lutheranism" is Lutheran *doctrine,* not Lutheran *practice.* Fr. Neuhaus' doubtfully reluctant accusation based on the Lutheran Brotherhood survey is illogical and untenable.

Barbara W. Elliott
Columbia City, IN

The recent Lutheran Brotherhood survey demonstrating a high degree of confusion among Lutherans on the doctrine of justification raises many issues for Lutheran clergymen. Chief among them is that we must resist current trends in the church by unapologetically preaching doctrine in place of the emotional, nonthreatening, nothingness offered by many contemporary congregations in their quest to be popular in a baby-boomers' world. But I also enjoyed Father Neuhaus' take on it—that Lutherans who are wrong on the doctrine of justification might as well be Catholics.

(The Rev.) Peter A. Speckhard
Community of Faith Lutheran Church
Spring Grove, IL

RJN replies:
To Barbara W. Elliott: A passing comment in While We're At It is not intended as a definitive statement of systematic theology. But while we're at it, some distinctions are in order. One might suggest that America is the American people who live under a political system defined by the Constitution. The Catholic Church is the Catholic people who are in (not always untroubled) communion with the bishops and the Petrine ministry. Lutheranism is the people called Lutheran or affiliated with institutions called Lutheran. If, on the other hand, belief in the doctrine of justification by faith alone is the precondition for the existence of the Church itself—an improbable claim that would un-Church all but a small part of what historically has been and is today the Church—the survey in question does raise interesting theological questions. To Peter A. Speckhard: Thank you for catching what was intended as a wry conclusion.

What Was Meant, What Was Said

Richard John Neuhaus reports in While We're At It (May) *World* magazine's purportedly "sneering" statement about abortionists doing business as usual during the Pope's visit to St. Louis. In the paragraph cited, we were contrasting the Missouri governor's no-execution gesture of respect to the absence of any similar stoppage by the child-killing industry.

Marvin Olasky
World
Austin, TX

RJN replies:
It appears there was a slip between editorial intention and the account—accurately described in the Public Square—that got published in *World.*

Put us on the rack!
in your library's journal section
FIRST THINGS

There are few better ways to enlarge the conversation about critical religion and society issues than to have FIRST THINGS as a standing resource in your library. Ask your librarian to put us on the rack—in the publications section alongside other intellectual journals of opinion.

Write our Subscription Services department for a special form and complimentary copy of our current issue to present to your library.

First Things Subscription Services · 129 Phelps Ave., Suite 312 · Rockford, IL 61108
Phone: 815-398-8569 · Fax: 815-398-8579 · E-mail: ravaughan@aol.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THIS TIME

Culture War No More?

James Nuechterlein

Most American conservatives think they're engaged in a culture war, and many of them think they're losing it. Now along comes Jeremy Rabkin, a thoughtful conservative commentator and professor of government at Cornell University, who tells them they're wrong on both counts ("The Culture War That Isn't," *Policy Review*, August & September, 1999). "As historical description," he says, "the notion of a 'culture war' is a gross distortion. As a guide to contemporary strategists, it is a needless counsel of despair."

The culture war metaphor—the sense that "the past several decades have been characterized by a sweeping struggle pitting the forces of liberalism and progressivism, on [the] one hand, against those of religious orthodoxy and tradition on the other"—became widely accepted after the publication of James Davison Hunter's *Culture Wars* in 1992, although a number of observers (including the beloved Editor-in-Chief of FT) had been employing the term for some years. By now, Rabkin concludes, the phrase has become "a ubiquitous description of reality among political and religious conservatives."

That, he is sure, is a mistake. It is based, to begin with, on a "liberal legend." "The story goes somewhat like this: The country used to be religious. Then modernization and secularization took hold with the growth of commerce, technology, and cities. Religious conservatives made a desperate effort to fight back the tide with Prohibition and the Scopes trial, and the humiliating failure of these efforts forced conservative Christians to retreat from politics for decades thereafter. And only the excesses of the 1960s and '70s prompted their reemergence."

None of this, Rabkin insists, is quite right. The temperance crusade was led not by conservative Christians but by progressive reformers who combined it, over time, with such other reform efforts as opposition to slavery, support for women's suffrage, and the campaign against child labor. (And the opposition to Prohibition was most strong not among secularists but among "traditional Catholics and Lutherans.") The Scopes trial was both more complex than the standard *Inherit the Wind* depiction of an implacable conflict between religious dogma and modern science and less momentous than it appeared in mythic liberal retrospect. Protestant fundamentalists had already been divided among themselves before Scopes, and they did not retreat from politics afterwards. Nor were their politics consistently conservative: a majority of them supported FDR in the 1930s, and as late as 1976 half of all who identified themselves as "evangelical Christians" voted for Jimmy Carter, his liberal politics notwithstanding.

The culture war imagery, Rabkin goes on, is as wrongheaded about contemporary politics as it is about political history. It tempts conservatives to ignore their victories and exaggerate their defeats. Its depiction of politics as war "imputes an absurdly inflated sense of discipline and purpose on each side" of the purported divide. It blinds itself to the fact that most American voters locate themselves not at one or another ideological extreme but in the "bewildered and exasperated . . . middle."

"The truth about America," Rabkin argues, is "far messier than a 'culture war' between 'orthodox' and 'progressive' forces. We are in the midst of many overlapping and cross-cutting social conflicts. Yes, there are deep divisions regarding public recognition or accommodation of religion and on sexual morals and 'family values.'" But, he insists, there are deep divisions on a whole range of other issues—gun control, multiculturalism, economic policy, environmentalism, animal rights, etc.—that "don't at all line up neatly as cultural divisions between religious conservatives and secularizing 'progressives.' We are a nation of Puritans and a nation of scoffers and we do . . . a lot of arguing. . . . That doesn't quite add up to a 'war.'"

The whole idea of culture war, Rabkin suggests, is somehow un-American. "The German term *Kulturkampf* derives from Bismarck's struggle to bring Catholic institutions under Prussian state control in the 1870s. It is a phrase that does reflect actual historical experience—but not very much in this country. *Kulturkampf* ideology had its echoes in struggles in many other European countries trying like Bismarck to erect modern states over the opposition (or imputed opposition) of faithful Catholics." Nothing like that struggle—or what Rabkin calls its "alternate legacies of fanaticism and fatalism"—finds an echo in the American experience.

What is one to make of all this? It would be a mistake to dismiss it out of hand. The culture

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war metaphor probably does contribute to the unfortunate tendency of American conservatives to imagine themselves a besieged minority locked in perpetual—and perpetually losing—apocalyptic conflict. Rabkin is also right to suggest that a sense of historical perspective is a useful antidote to that defeatist tendency. (I have made a similar argument in these pages—see "The Myth of Declension," May 1999.) Visions of Armageddon make for grandiose hopes and fears—and for a dangerously overheated politics.

Along the same lines, Rabkin's invocation of American exceptionalism should serve as a salutary reminder. Favorable circumstances allowed the American revolutionaries and founders to avoid the ideological extravagances of their later counterparts in France, Russia, and elsewhere. And in succeeding generations our political leaders have similarly managed to avoid, comparatively speaking at least, a politics of wretched excess.

On most issues most of the time American politics is indeed a struggle for the center, and Rabkin is right to warn conservatives about the pitfalls of political polarization. As he points out, such a politics "is quite dangerous if you do not have the majority on your side—and religious conservatives have no reason to think they have a reliable, natural majority on their side." "But," he adds, "the majority will only be against them if forced to take sides." If conservatives would disenthrall themselves of the culture war illusion, he suggests, they would recognize that their situation is not so dire as they imagine. They may not occupy the commanding heights of American politics—but neither do the liberals, who, after all, find electoral and legislative success these days chiefly when they manage to mask (and moderate) their liberalism.

All this in Rabkin's argument strikes me as eminently sensible. But it is not the whole story. Most Americans—wisely, in my view—do not normally preoccupy themselves with developments in the political and intellectual landscape, and for them the notion that the nation is caught up in a culture war is indeed alien and unpersuasive. But those who, for better or worse, find it their business to deal with ideas cannot but be aware that such a conflict is in fact in progress.

It rages among the cultural elites, and it is in deadly earnest. It involves competing worldviews that, however subtle and complex in their details, can nonetheless be summed up with rough accuracy under such encompassing rubrics as "progressive" vs. "traditionalist" or "secular" vs. "orthodox." It is essential that the war of ideas be conducted with as much civility as can be mustered, and the search for common ground must never be abandoned. But for those called to be public intellectuals, it is an evasion either to pretend there is no conflict or to fail to take a stand on contested issues of principle.

And, in culture as in economics, there is a trickle-down effect. Ideas matter, and in the long run they shape, willy-nilly, the conditions and conduct of everyday life—sometimes quite dramatically, as in the ideas promulgated as law by the Supreme Court. Moreover they do so rather more systematically than Rabkin suggests. Divisions over ideas often do "cross-cut," as he says, but at least as often they do not. As George Will has said, ideas cluster, and people cluster politically. There is more consistency than Rabkin recognizes in our disagreements over, among other things, abortion, school choice, homosexuality, religion in public life, gun control, multiculturalism, economic policy, environmentalism, and animal rights. Political choice is not a random process. And the more attention people pay to their choices, the more consistent they become in choosing.

Rabkin is right to warn against conducting all of politics all the time as cultural warfare. He is also right to suggest that conservatives are most likely to be successful, as Ronald Reagan demonstrated, when they present their views in as nonthreatening, indeed as winsome, a manner as possible. But they would condemn themselves to fecklessness and irrelevance if they lost sight of the larger scheme of things in which particular events and policies find their place. For, like it or not, the culture war that Jeremy Rabkin says isn't, most definitely is. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opinion

Two Boats, a Helicopter & Stem Cells

Russell E. Saltzman

Remember the story of the guy who died in the flood? A Red Cross boat had come by earlier when the water was above the window sills, but the fellow refused rescue saying, "The Lord will save me." A second boat came when the water was to the eaves and the man was hanging from the gutters. But again he refused rescue. "The Lord will save me," he declared. Scrambling onto his roof ahead of the ever-rising waters the man spied a helicopter heading his way. A rope was lowered from the copter, but the obstinate guy batted it away and shouted over the din of the rotors, "The Lord will save me." Of course he drowned. He arrived at Heaven's throne perplexed, hurt, angry, and dripping wet. "Why," he shouted at God, "didn't you save me?" "Give me a break," sighed the Lord God Almighty. "I sent two boats and a helicopter."

I am a diabetic, Type II. I flunked a health insurance examination in March 1995. That's how I found out. Six months before, an annual health exam said I was as fit as I could be, for a man my age. (Doctors always add that part.) But somewhere on the inclined plane to forty-eight, my pancreas decided to malfunction and it stopped producing enough insulin to keep my blood sugar count within normal range. All of a sudden, my blood count was hitting the 400 mark. That's somewhere just short of the point where you either go blind or tank out in a coma. A blood count of 80 to 120 an hour after eating is considered normal. I guess I was lucky. Of the nation's diabetics, so estimates go, only about half have been diagnosed.

Since becoming a diabetic I'm more aware of other diabetics. It seems, in fact, I can't get away from them. For most of my whole life I knew only one diabetic, a fellow up in Nebraska, but now I know literally dozens. I'm sure I knew others before, but now that my awareness has been sensitized, suddenly they're all over the place, and it seems they are losing body parts. There's Frank, age seventy. Doctors took off his lower left leg earlier this year. His trouble began with bypass surgery a year before. Any kind of surgery can be serious trouble for a diabetic. We have trouble healing. The blood doesn't travel quite as fast or as far as it should to help mend flesh. His slow recovery led to complications. At first he was to lose only the tips of his toes. His physician took those off, but after ten days in the hospital with no appreciable sign of healing, Frank lost his leg at the knee. About six weeks ago he lost the tips of his other toes. He's a game fellow, though, traveling with a walker and a prosthesis, but traveling.

Then there's Alma, eighty-three. She has lost both legs, the last of a series of amputations that began three years ago with the loss of two toes on the left leg. She never healed and her surgeon kept cutting—toes, mid-calf, mid-thigh—until he found a place where the blood did reach and would heal the wound. Then little blisters popped up on her other leg, and the tiresome ordeal began all over again. She resisted, mightily. That last leg was her last shred of mobility and she kept it as long as possible, hopping to and fro in her room at the nursing home until the pain overwhelmed her and the blood poisoning almost killed her. Indeed, as she told me, she was hoping the blood poisoning *would* kill her, and then she could be done with this misery. It was the pain that compelled her consent. Alma has been a Type II diabetic since she was in her thirties. At an age now when she ought to be puttering around her farm house, she's propped up in a nursing home wheelchair.

Being a diabetic at first wasn't a hard thing, except for the daily finger pricks for blood samples. My blood count was controlled by a diet of 1,400 to 1,800 calories a day, and that took care of it. I could eat a whole pie, the doctor said, just so long as I ate nothing else the entire day. I wasn't exactly overweight, but trimming down a bit seemed like a good idea. At least it did until I reached my college weight of, lo! some twenty-five years before, and then kept on losing, finally dropping down to my high school weight. I was turning back into that lanky, skinny geek all the girls loved so much. That's when the doctor said, eat more. Some of the pounds came back on and I went on oral medication, one pill a day. Now I've graduated to two medications, five pills a day, and one finger prick every morning to sample my blood count. One finger prick is progress, of a sort. Early on it had been three a day. That was the bad news, the doctor said. The good news was, I could alternate fingers. She's something of a bedside humorist, the doctor is.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A chronic illness, I am learning, is a real burden. It's the chronic part that gives it such an oppressive weight, knowing I'll never be rid of it. I have discovered a new empathy with those of my parishioners who suffer similar or worse disorders, a shared experience none of us likes. But for whatever good my illness may produce—endurance, patience, character, that stuff St. Paul wrote that sounds so nice in the abstract but requires the spirituality of a saint to comprehend—I'd just as soon have let this particular cup pass, had God given me the choice. But He didn't. So I filled out the papers for free diabetic supplies and I scan the literature touting new medications, insulin pumps, magic bullets, anything that holds some promise that I won't end up clomping around like Frank or getting myself carried to the toilet like Alma. I watch my diet, stick with the medication, and, don't doubt it, I inspect my feet every morning.

There's my dilemma. There is something supposedly just over the horizon that sounds for all the world like two boats and a helicopter, and if I don't grab it, maybe I'm the fool? The promise is fetal stem cell therapy.

Stem cells are cell tissue extracted from human embryos. These are marvelous little things, so researchers are saying. They can be teased into providing an endless supply of healthy cells for unhealthy organs. The cells have been "convinced" by researchers to grow into nerve cells, skin cells, heart cells—in fact, potentially all of the 210 kinds of human cells can be grown from fetal stem cells. There is even a possibility of stem cells being used to treat Down Syndrome babies in the womb. Fetal cells that have become healthy pancreatic cells might be injected into a diseased pancreas and provide a lifelong cure for diabetes. Or they might be used to treat any number of other disorders like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. There is a whole list of things at which we might squirt stem cells if researchers have their way. Stem cells are described as the Rosetta Stone for all cell research, including cloning. Quite a claim, and it may be true. It may also be quite terrible.

Fetal stem cells presently come from two sources, abandoned embryos from fertility clinics and five-to-nine-week-old aborted fetuses. So, when this research is perfected and receives FDA approval, all I have to do to benefit from it is give up my opposition to abortion and most forms of embryonic research. Swallow a little pride, take a shot or two, whatever's called for, and pretty soon I'll be eating like a regular guy, all my body parts intact. Why, after all, should we let a perfectly good embryo, one that is not a candidate for implantation in a vacant womb, go to waste? Otherwise abandoned and unwanted, should it languish frozen on a shelf somewhere, especially when there is so much good it can do for others? Aborted fetuses are already just so much waste material. Let's be green, if that's the phrase, and recycle those little suckers for all they're worth.

There may be a way to avoid abortions and embryos as a stem cell source by regressing adult cells. Take some skin cells, tease them back to their primal state, and then grow them forward to make hearts, brain matter, and a cure for diabetes. The research is only in its beginnings and far, far from complete. It may be years before anything like that approaches reality. So why wait, when, according to some researchers, fetal stem cells already have proven their potential? From a utilitarian view, the argument is unassailable.

There is for the moment, but only for the moment, a federal ban on this kind of research. There is a great deal of pressure for repeal. Naturally, the ban affects only researchers who receive federal money. There is no ban against privately funded research. Drug companies and biotech firms are getting into this big. The financial gain that would accrue from a successful and proven stem cell therapy is unimaginable, and there are financial interests with some very big imaginations at play. This is one of the arguments for lifting the federal ban on fetal cell research. Someone is going to do it, is already doing it, and all of it outside the glare of public accountability. This research had better be tucked inside a government package, sanitized by a ton of federal regulations, organized by the National Institutes of Health, all to get this thing under public control. Quick. Otherwise in some few short years we will be dealing with questions of patented life, private cloning, vats of transplantable organs, and maybe the "decanted babies" and "Bokanovskian twins" (clones in today's phrase) from *Brave New World.*

But that is exactly what we are dealing with already. Science has once again sped beyond the ken of ethical insight. The cat is out of the bag and research is roaring ahead. Federalizing fetal stem cell research will solve nothing morally because, whether federal or commercial, it requires the destruction of human embryos and it feeds on abortion. Find another source of stem cells and the moral problem goes away. But, as mentioned, finding that source will be a much slower process. Meanwhile, present research goes on with the moral status of the embryo up for grabs—is the embryo human life or a mere bit of research material?—and it walks hand in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hand with that negation of life known as a woman's right to choose.

Aldous Huxley, who wrote *Brave New World* in 1933, worried that science was being twisted all around. Where once, as with the sabbath, science was made for man, he foresaw and chillingly created in his novel a world where man is made for science. In Huxley's fictionalized world the process that turned science around was methodical and deliberate, and without moral regard. In our own world, the process going on is less tidy but no less deliberate, and with equally little moral restraint.

My answer to the moral status of the embryo or the use of aborted fetuses tends to be as simple as it is adamant. It is not right for big, strong human beings to benefit themselves by preying upon weak, little human beings. And if someone wants to suggest that stem cell therapy really is God's way of coming to rescue me from an insulin drought, well, just call me gimpy.

Russell E. Saltzman *is the pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Stover, Missouri, and editor of* Forum Letter, *an independent Lutheran publication where an earlier version of this article appeared.*

Edith Stein, Apostate Saint

David Novak

The recent canonization of Edith Stein as Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross by the Roman Catholic Church poses a number of very serious challenges to living Jews, we who are still members of the people to whom Edith Stein believed she also belonged, even at her death in Auschwitz.

Theologically speaking, Edith Stein was arguably the most significant Jewish convert to Christianity of this century. In general, Jewish tradition regards such persons as apostates who have removed themselves from the normative Jewish community in a radical way, even if they still consider themselves part of the body of the Jewish people, as Stein did. Judaism in fact also regards such persons as part of the body of the Jewish people. "A Jew who has sinned is still a Jew" is an important talmudic principle. Nevertheless, an apostate is an apostate, even when a person of extraordinary intellectual and moral virtues. Our reactions in such cases, however great or small the person before us is, range from anger to sorrow. We cannot very well be indifferent.

In the case of Edith Stein, though, it seems we Jews must be more precise in giving reasons why we cannot celebrate with Catholics the life and death of Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. We need to give theologically cogent reasons for why we would have had to distance ourselves from her in life (as her pious Jewish mother did), and why we would have joined that segment of her family who chose not to attend her beatification by Pope John Paul II in Cologne in 1987. Stein's case is not an easy one for us. Jews have been able to dismiss most modern Jewish converts to Christianity as people motivated by social or professional ambition, self-hatred, ignorance, or mental imbalance. But anyone who knew Edith Stein or who knows anything about her life would have to admit that none of these categories applies to her. Indeed, Edith Stein comes across as sui generis. She might be the most uniquely problematic Jew for us since Saul of Tarsus.

The easiest way to deal with the problem is to accept the liberal assumption that one's religious convictions are a matter of individual choice and that everyone must respect the choice of everyone else to believe whatever they want and practice any religion or no religion, as they choose. On this view, Edith Stein had a right to become a Catholic and change her name to Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, just as the Catholic priest Father Kenneth Cox had a right to become a Jew and change his name to Abraham Carmel. At the political level, most Jews and most Catholics have accepted the liberal idea of religious freedom. Some see it as a necessary part of the social contract that enables us to participate in civil society. Others see it as being in the best interest of faith itself, which cannot legitimately be coerced. Pragmatically, we realize that our religious communities are probably better off without people who have found a spiritual home elsewhere and do not want to be with us anymore. All this is how we talk and have to talk in the public square. But while that talk is not disingenuous, it is secondary to the primary commitments of both Jews and Christians.

The most fruitful dialogue between Jews and Catholics (and other Christians as well) has been about our relations in the public realm, where we have discovered significant common ground on such issues as public morality and religious liberty. Nevertheless, the discovery of such commonality, beneficial as it is, does not change the fact that at the deepest level of our existence Jews and Christians are making not only different communal claims, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rival communal claims. The best way to God, the one that ought not be exchanged for something less, is *either* by the Torah and the Jewish tradition *or* by Christ and the Church. The choice is unavoidable. One cannot accept Christ and still be part of the normative Jewish community; one cannot live by Torah and still be part of the Church. Early in our common history, indeed almost simultaneously, Jewish authorities ruled against the practice of Christianity by Jews and the Church ruled against the practice of Judaism by Christians ("judaization")—even by Christians born as Jews. Our acceptance of the liberal order of civil society has for the most part enabled us to make these rival communal claims civilly, and without fear of political repercussions. But that accommodation should not make us slide into the superficiality of civil religion or the disorientation of religious syncretism. Sometimes Jews and Christians have to speak to each other without the mediation of the secular public realm, as we must when speaking about Edith Stein.

Because Judaism and Christianity are both covenantal religions, the relationship of the individual Jew or Christian to God is always within covenanted community. Stein, even when physically alone in her nun's cell, was still existentially part of the community. The community in which one hears the voice of God structures how one hears that voice and interprets what it says. There is no universal revelation until the end of history, which is why election is the doctrine of identity for both Christians and Jews. God chooses us; we do not choose God, at least originally. That election is either by natural birth or by the rebirth of conversion, which is very much like adoption. We only can accept or reject the community into which, as one former Christian philosopher put it, we have "been thrown."

Based on these covenantal assumptions, it follows that both Judaism and Christianity assert what liberals can only regard as an unfair asymmetry: One can check into the covenant, but one cannot check out of it. A convert is "born again," which also means that from God's perspective he or she has retroactively always been in the community. An apostate, conversely, does not quit the community existentially; he or she is only absent without leave. Excommunication bars a sinful Catholic from receiving the sacraments, not from the Church herself, just as *herem*, the ban of ostracism, does not mean that a Jew is no longer a Jew. So Jews regard Edith Stein as a Jewish apostate, but always a Jew nonetheless. And she agreed with us about her Jewish identity; it is about her apostasy that she obviously had a different opinion. We cannot avoid the question of apostasy because it brings us face to face with the rival truth claims our two communities make—to ourselves, to each other, and to the world.

Judaism and Christianity alike present themselves as the fullest truth of God's relationship with the world, but both can recognize more limited forms of truth elsewhere. Confirmation in one's covenant does not imply having a monopoly on God. As the prophet Amos (9:7) put it to the overly proud people of Israel, "Are you not for Me like the Ethiopians?" This view enables us to live with other people in good faith and to have genuine respect for them and their traditions.

This approach, common in form but different in substance for us, might be summarized in the talmudic principle that "one is to rise, not descend, in holiness." To illustrate, let me set up four possible situations and suggest the Jewish answer to each of them. (A Christian answer would be substantively different in two of the scenarios, but I think the Christian logic would have to be the same as Jewish logic in all of them.) The four situations are: 1) a pagan wanting to convert to Christianity instead of Judaism; 2) a pagan wanting to convert to Judaism instead of Christianity; 3) a Christian wanting to convert to Judaism; 4) a Jew wanting to convert to Christianity. By "pagan," I mean someone who neither by birth nor by the rebirth of conversion has ever been a Jew or a Christian.

The Jew would regard the pagan's conversion to Christianity as a good choice inasmuch as Christianity is a valid gentile relationship with the Lord God, maker of heaven and earth, elector of Israel, giver of the Torah, and redeemer of the world. Of course, he would regard the pagan's conversion to Judaism as the best choice possible. A Christian wanting to convert to Judaism has not only made the best choice but is well prepared for it by having been a Christian and therefore knowing, however partially, the Lord God of Israel. The final option, the Jew wanting to convert to Christianity, is of course the option of Edith Stein.

Edith Stein accepted what Christians have always had to say to Jews, namely, that Christianity solves the problems of Judaism better than Judaism does because Christianity provides the savior to whom Jews have always looked. She therefore did not consider herself a runaway from Judaism (however rudimentary her own Judaism was) but rather a Jew whose Judaism brought her into the Church. Her logic was clearly supersessionist. How could it have been otherwise? Indeed, had it been otherwise, Edith Stein would have had to have said what Franz Rosenzweig said when he rejected Christian supersessionist claims: "I therefore remain a Jew!" (Rosen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

zweig, a Jewish philosopher and contemporary of Stein, whom many consider the greatest Jewish theologian of this century, himself almost converted to Christianity.)

Supersessionism is the subject of deep theological debate today. Many Jews have seen it as the core of Christian anti-Judaism. Many Christians are embarrassed by it, seeing it as part of the anti-Judaism that was so easily appropriated by modern anti-Semitism. Yet, Christian supersessionism need not denigrate Judaism. It can look to the Jewish origins of Christianity happily and still learn of those origins from living Jews, whom Pope John Paul II likes to call "elder brothers." Christian supersessionism can still affirm that God has not annulled his everlasting covenant with the Jewish people, neither past nor present nor future. Jews can expect no more than that from Christians, and Christians probably cannot concede any more to Judaism. For if Christianity does not regard itself as going beyond Judaism, why should Christians not become Jews? And, conversely, any Jew who believes Christianity supersedes Judaism can only in good faith become a Christian—as Edith Stein did.

Fruitful conversations of late between Jews and Christians have largely bracketed this critical issue for good reasons. It is, nevertheless, the crucial question that leaves the two communities at an impasse. All attempts to get beyond it—be they political, exegetical, or philosophical—have been failures. After all, it is *the* question of truth, and truth is what we are both all about. To bracket this question is quite different from either suppressing it altogether or reducing all discussion to it.

Edith Stein represents our impasse. She cannot be a bridge between Jews and Catholics because in this world one cannot be simultaneously both a faithful Jew and a faithful Catholic. Since the Jewish and Catholic communities are mutually exclusive, and both Jews and Catholics derive their identities from God's covenant with their communities, no member of one community can also be a member in good standing of the other. Moreover, one cannot expect the approval of the covenanted community one has left. As with Abraham our father, the answer to God's call always involves leaving some earlier household in one way or another, and that household does not and cannot provide one with a warm farewell.

In this world Jews and Christians do have much to say to each other and much to do together. But our more important task of waiting for God we must do separately. The agenda of dialogue must be kept distant from the agenda of conversion. Dialogue is more about this world; conversion is more about the world-to-come. Until the end time, it is not for us to judge matters of identity, except in the most mundane cases involving communal rights and penalties. Because of that, while we Jews can *empathize* with Catholics who have found yet another saint, another exemplary holy life, it is not something we can *feel with* (the original meaning of "sympathy") Catholics any more than we could celebrate the Eucharist with them. At this deepest level we are still strangers to each other. So it seems that we shall remain until the end, when we hope to be the lasting friends of God, and thus of each other.

David Novak *holds the J. Richard and Dorothy Shiff Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. These remarks are based on a lecture he delivered in April 1999 to a symposium on Edith Stein sponsored by the Lumen Christi Institute at the University of Chicago and Loyola University.*

Angelism and the Provincial Self

Marion Montgomery

(Editors' Note: This essay is adapted from a convocation address presented at Hillsdale College last October.)

I begin with a statement you will agree is true, after which you're on your own: mine is a more interesting circumstance at this moment than it can possibly be for you. What a fascinating coincidence: you, green in the fall wood of October; I very near the seer and yellow leaf.

Your greening time is for me a fall which speaks hope of an eventual fullness for you, against an old fallenness deeper than the calendar year can now mean for you—especially if you have forgotten your old scion Adam. For me, the sumac and maple and poplar leaves are turning variously and most gloriously toward brown. But here you are at the spring of what I know, better than you, must be a turning year.

And so, in partial celebration of my own fortunate fall, two poems which eventually—not now—may give you delayed pleasure within your own turning world. First "The Scholars," by William Butler Yeats.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bald heads forgetful of their sins,
Old, learned, respectable bald heads
Edit and annotate the lines
That young men, tossing on their beds,
Rhymed out in love's despair
To flatter beauty's ignorant ear.

All shuffle there; all cough in ink;
All wear the carpet with their shoes;
All think what other people think;
All know the man their neighbor knows.
Lord, what would they say
Did their Catullus walk that way?

But then also "Blue Girls," written by John Crowe Ransom.

Twirling your blue skirts, traveling the sward
Under the towers of your seminary,
Go listen to your teachers old and contrary
Without believing a word.

Tie the white fillets then about your hair
And think no more of what will come to pass
Than bluebirds that go walking on the grass
And chattering on the air.

Practice your beauty, blue girls, before it fail;
And I will cry with my loud lips and publish
Beauty which all our power shall never establish,
It is so frail.

For I could tell you a story which is true;
I know a woman with a terrible tongue,
Blear eyes fallen from blue,
All her perfections tarnished—yet it is not long
Since she was lovelier than any of you.

In this interval between whatever restless tossing in the green year and that future state of becoming yourself old and contrary, I urge you now, in my coughing words, to a healthy skepticism, a skepticism, that is, unyielding to cynicism. Not a balance easy to keep, especially if we—you or I—lose anchor in a steadying truth: each of us is limited more deeply by our mortality and our ignorance than is accounted for by our talking about blue girls or coughing scholars. This healthy skepticism is a difficult deportment to learn, but through it we come to terms with our limit as *this* person to the truth of things, especially the truth about myself as *person.* The truth of things: the multitudinous mystery of creation itself which draws us to know, raising in us willy-nilly a desire to understand. And then perhaps—or so we must desire—we may become wise in a valid progress as this person—as "myself."

Meanwhile we stand and sway, always in danger of the winds of the world, but the more endangered—because we are persons and not trees. We are tempted to presume beyond knowledge or understanding. At the most dangerous point, we presume to a comprehension absolute: a comprehension of whatever our gift of intellect rests upon at the moment. What we easily forget is that understanding accommodates us to an uncertainty, to an accepting of limits to our omniscience. By limit we are prevented—except as a self-induced and self-defeating illusion—from an absolute comprehension of any thing, including even ourselves. For comprehension is a property reserved to the nature of the Creator God, as are omnipotence and omniscience.

This danger of presuming to an absolute comprehension is spoken to by folk wisdom seldom heeded, most especially by those of us who cough in ink. *It ain't what we don't know that makes us ignorant. It's what we do know that ain't true.*

Thus a Nobel Prize-winner in genetics, Richard Dawkins, tells us what he doesn't know. We are as persons, he says, only "lumbering robots" whose genes have "created us body and mind." There lies hidden in this direct quote, however, a royal *we*: Dawkins does not assume *himself* thus described. Rather he stands at a transcendent point, above both genes and body and mind, in a presumption of containing by his pronouncement an absolute comprehension of the nature of man. Thus he becomes an excellent illustration of what I shall call the provincial mind. Alas, his is an intellectual malady conspicuous among our intelligentsia: the modernist mind presuming intellectual autonomy beyond limit.

I recommend a motto for you to place over your study desk, lest you yield to the temptation of this provincialism of our Nobel Prize-winner. It will nevertheless, if you abide by it, risk your own Nobel Prize, though a nobler prize may prove in the offing. *The purpose of the study of philosophy is not to learn what others have thought, but to learn how the truth of things stands.* The wise man speaking these words does not mean to excuse you or me from knowing what others have thought. What concerns him is that we not confuse those mediate ends with the larger ends of understanding, toward that even larger end whereby we may be considered—by others—as wise.

What concerns Thomas Aquinas—our motto being his—is that we remember that truth is the measure of our knowledge, not our knowledge the measure of truth. This is not an inversion recent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to us. Protagoras, the Greek sophist of the fifth century B.C., declared man the measure of all things. It is a pronouncement which Aristotle, in his *Metaphysics*, returns to again and again in his struggle to establish with irrefutable argument truth's independence—in his attempt to discover rationally the unmoved mover, the cause of creation itself. Forgetting which is the measure and which the measured, our education becomes a preparation for some game show such as *Jeopardy*, though more likely *Wheel of Fortune*. One is morally responsible to hold to this distinction of truth as precedent to knowing, as opposed to the presumption of our Nobel geneticist that he is the authorized determiner of truth. In the end he distorts the very genuine knowledge he possesses as geneticist, for which he received that prize, but from which he has lost the understanding that life is a mystery at last which defies our absolute comprehension. For we are not, though we may sometimes pretend to be, God.

Aquinas, of course, understands a largeness in his use of the term *philosophy*, now largely lost, as when we award a degree of "doctor of philosophy" in badminton or basketball. St. Thomas is concerned with the metaphysical journey proper to each of us, according to our intellectual gifts, so long as we are guided in that journey by a love of truth, where the truth is loved as the measure of our progress as a person. His argument takes as its premise our *given* nature: the person, he holds, is an intellectual soul incarnate. It must follow that science and art are disciplines of intellect (to each according to his gifts) when they are properly proportionate to each person's desire for perfection—whether one discover his calling to be that of teacher or farmer or bricklayer or poet.

Along your way here you will discover remnants of that older understanding of human nature as it is relevant to your intellectual responsibilities, perhaps finding that residue scattered through your college catalogue in descriptions of courses. They survive, in spite of Charles W. Eliot's intentional reduction of philosophy from its larger, classical sense. As President of Harvard from 1869 into our century, he was interested in educational specialties as the final end of formal education. At Harvard, he instituted what you now know as an "elective" system tailored to your "major." His restructuring has by now filtered down, infecting educational programs even unto kindergarten, I fear.

At his retirement President Eliot preached a sermon to Harvard theological students called "The Religion of the Future." A few of his doctrinal points are sufficient to suggest why one might call him the Socrates of the Religion of Provincialism, the prime doctrine of which is the specialization of intellect as man's final earthly end. Now that new religion, he says, "will not be based on authority, either spiritual or temporal," given that "the tendency towards liberty is progressive, and among educated men is irresistible." Among its principles: it will allow "no personifications of the primitive forces of nature," nor any "worship, express or implied, of dead ancestors, teachers, or rulers." Nor will "the primary object . . . be the personal welfare or safety of the individual in this world or the other . . . but service to others, and . . . contributions to the common good." It "will not be propitiatory, sacrificial, or expiatory." (These terms are specific rejections of orthodox Christianity's belief in the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.) Nor will this religion of the future "perpetuate the Hebrew anthropomorphic representations of God." The only God allowable, then, must be the god called the social State.

President Eliot's somewhat distant relative, Thomas Stearns Eliot, was in summer school at Harvard at the time, attempting to complete a poem you know as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" along with some others. These early poems, if carefully read, reflect his own alienation as a "progressive" intellectual—the "educated" person President Eliot envisages as the true disciple of his new religion. It will be but a few years later, however, that the poet, as a skeptical and liberated intellectual, will become cynical about existence itself, especially about his own. He will experience a nervous breakdown, which he himself will come to understand at last as rather a spiritual crisis, out of the intellectual provincialism he drank in at Harvard.

T. S. Eliot is that rare intellectual in our century who escaped provincialism. May you prove so as well. But in this moment of your strange arrest out of the world, you are impinged upon by many intellectual provincials. That is why I counsel a healthy skepticism—healthy in that you must not throw out those truths about genetics, for instance, because of the geneticist's own provincialism. With such safeguard, you may journey toward becoming a philosopher, a lover of wisdom through an openness to the truth of things. You may thus keep green a youthful desire to understand, however old you are by the world's measure, and whatever the "major" appearing on your transcript—which by the larger modernist world will be taken as the health report on your conditioned mind, asserting officially the inoculations that have been formally exercised upon your intellect. At least, that tends to be the assumption about transcripts, an assumption with which you will have to come to terms after you leave this small Eden.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Indeed, that is an apt description of the nature of education itself: a coming to terms with the truth of things in resisting the general shallowness of our intellectual world. At its deepest level, that means coming to terms with your particular, discrete intellectual limits, whereby you are *this* person and no other. For it is in this accommodation that you perfect your dignity as a person. A person born to fullness, not the digital counter suggested by the term *individual.* An accommodation to limit through concepts measured by the truth of things. To refuse that responsibility to limit is to choose provincialism. This is a term I need now to address directly, appealing to a poet who knows both bald scholars and blue girls. The poet and critic Allen Tate speaks helpfully to my point when he says:

> When the regional man, in his ignorance, often an intensive and creative ignorance, of the world, extends his own immediate necessities into the world, and assumes that the present moment is unique, he becomes the provincial man. . . . For provincialism is that state of mind in which regional men lose their origins in the past and its continuity into the present, and begin every day as if there had been no yesterday. . . . [I]t is a difference between two worlds: the provincial world of the present, which sees in material welfare and legal justice the whole solution to the human problem; and the classical-Christian world, based upon the regional consciousness, which held that honor, truth, imagination, human dignity, and limited acquisitiveness could alone justify a social order however rich and efficient it may be.

In Tate's terms, we discover that we are born provincial, the infant engaging in its present moment so that it may survive; in that very engagement, though, it may meet love, if fortunate in the larger circumstances in which it is raised. It is by a discovery of the power of its own will that the infant, and then the child, may be tempted to turn provincial, away from the regional nurturing by family and community. Any parent who has endured one or two adolescents will know at once my distinction. The adolescent is not likely to understand it until he must deal with his own children.

With grace and a right will, the provincial may recover an ordinate relation to limits—may become a provincial recovering to a regional health. That is, because we are finite creatures, wisdom in us requires our concern for our region of creation, though we must recognize as well that we are at large in creation, on a journey toward an ultimate and uncreated end. We are always required to respond in *this* moment to *this* impinging reality of *this* time and *this* place. Such impingements bear in them always other times and places to which we supply the ambiguously abstract term *history.* We discover thereby our membership in a community with the living and the dead, coming to terms as we may with our limited gifts as we journey in the light of tradition. Our responsibility as intellectual creature? To sort tradition by the light of the truth of things.

Reality requires of us that we perfect our *given* nature. We are each an intellectual soul, yet we are incarnate; our intellects understand only by putting together and taking apart particular things. As a result, we struggle to recover our simplicity of nature, that created simplicity of our personhood, through discursive intellectual labor. This is the labor proper to the stewardship of our gift as *this* person. It is a labor necessary since Adam.

Ours is nevertheless a simple, not a divided, nature, though we may easily divide ourselves against ourselves for reasons Genesis and not genes best explain. Our limited intellects are discursive, lacking that angelic, intuitive gift of knowing which Milton has an angel explain to his Adam in *Paradise Lost.* As simple created persons, existing through grace and existing by limit, we have as our only freedom from limit a capacity of will to reject all limit—all creation. That becomes the principle whereby we embrace nothingness as preferable to a consent to our own givenness.

You will find in your literature one direction this rejection may take—in *Hamlet* a famous soliloquy beginning "To be or not to be," for instance. But our post-Hamlet world has largely gone another way, choosing a usurpation of all limit by presuming our finite intellects to be autonomous and thereby capable of their own transcendence. They are absolute unto themselves, rising above being mere robots determined by genes, as our geneticist implies in words largely emptied of truth. We lesser souls meanwhile breathe in the exhaust from his burning of reality by his will. We may become giddily inclined to will a transcendence of our own, gaining an illusion of intellect as if jet-propelled by will above the limits of creation. Thus are we possessed by that destructive intellectual heresy called *angelism.*

This heretical presumption is a religion of its own,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at present the dominant religion of the Western world. It feeds on a distortion of our desire for a perfection of the gifts within our limits. Angelism demands instead a perfection beyond all other perfections within creation, declaring a relativism to which we would be God; it assumes that intellect is the sole agent of our perfection. Like old Adam, then, we are restless in our limitedness. Nietzsche persuaded us that freedom from created limit is our proper end. Nietzsche tempts us to believe ourselves capable of moving beyond being mere men, becoming supermen on the way to becoming gods, by our will to power. If, on the other hand, we understand the virtues of a regional deportment, we may rather be pulled away from such a willful angelism by a desire in accord with reality, in an openness to a surrender beyond the arrogant presumption that the self is the only god. We may reach in this recovery an accommodation with that inexorcizable ghost of intellectual uncertainty.

Education is a beginning of this resolution, a gradual recognition of recovery from the temptation to that provincialism which Tate describes; a reorienting of our desire for fulfillment as persons in a regionalism allowing us openness to creation. It is an openness Thomas Aquinas—or the later T. S. Eliot—would call *love.* That is the address to the truth of things which we call *understanding,* allowing us a level of perfection in our particular, limited gifts. It is allowed through grace, insofar as we remove obstacles to grace. We may even at last come to practice the virtue of *prudence,* learned in relation to a humility which initially opens us to creation and thence to its Creator. Here lies the prospect of the fulfillment of our limited gifts as person. That is, we become a *loving person.* We no longer confuse our presumption of truth with truth itself, knowing that truth is always independent of our presumption. We become, this is to say, a *person becoming.* In an older phrase, we are *homo viator*: a person in pilgrimage toward a perfection of the peculiar limit to our gifts as *this* person—Saul or Paul, Mary, Martha, or Elizabeth.

Marion Montgomery, *poet, novelist, and critic, is author, most recently, of* The Truth of Things: Liberal Arts and the Recovery of Reality.

Coming in November:
Jean Bethke Elshtain
on
Abraham Lincoln

Liberating Germaine Greer

Midge Decter

I never met Germaine Greer, but I did see her once in live performance—and a most diverting performance it was. The year, as I remember it, was 1970. Norman Mailer had recently published a very long article on the then newly declared women's revolution and had succeeded, as was his wont, in scandalizing both the revolutionaries and their conservative ill-wishers. Some enterprising showman (showlady, actually) arranged for Mailer to defend himself in public debate with three women: the literary critic Diana Trilling, who read a formal and somewhat inconclusive paper on Mailer's vision of the thing between men and women; Jill Johnston, a lesbian activist and columnist for the *Village Voice,* who failed rather embarrassingly in her attempt to shock the audience; and last, and mainly, Germaine Greer.

Miss Greer had recently become famous as the author of a highly celebrated liberationist tract called *The Female Eunuch,* whose declared purpose was to open women's eyes to how much men actually hated them and how successfully men had conspired to teach them to hate themselves. What was notable about her book—amid all the frenzied declarations and totally off-the-wall analyses of women's lot that constituted the first wave of liberationist literature—was that it was highly literate, which no doubt contributed to the fact that it had become an overnight "classic."

Miss Greer, who was (and judging from the photograph on the jacket of her new book, still is) a very beautiful woman, was the last of the lady panelists to speak. As she rose from her chair to walk to the lectern, those of us in the audience who were seated at some distance from the stage could see for the first time that she had, for reasons that would soon become apparent, gotten herself up for the occasion in a long and slinky black gown, while flung across her shoulder and dragged behind her on the floor was a long fur boa. She then proceeded to read a highfalutin little statement about art, the gravamen of which was that we should again seek for the glory days of the Gothic cathedrals, whose greatest works had been built by a community of anonymous

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

artisans. The reason I remember what she said after lo these nearly thirty years is that in my surprise (which soon gave way to something else) I wrote down a mean-spirited little summary of it: "Germaine Greer says that if she can't be a great writer, let all great works of literature be anonymous."

The "something else" my surprise gave way to was great amusement. For what Miss Greer was really up to on that occasion, what her dress, demeanor, and manner of speaking were clearly intended for, was not a discussion of the condition of women but, quite simply, the seduction of Norman Mailer.

In those days Norman Mailer was a friend, and I had by then with the same kind of amusement watched a fair number of women go after him in pretty much the same way. Something about him clearly invited female provocation, and, allowing, of course, for differences of personal style, usually just about as naked as this.

Now, whether Germaine Greer actually succeeded with Mailer I don't know, but I suspect not—at least not that evening. But as for me, I was left on that occasion with a very important reminder: to wit, when you read feminist literature, always look for some barely hidden giveaway.

As with its author, so with *The Female Eunuch* itself, which I set about reading the next day. One of Germaine Greer's declaratory purposes may have been to make women understand how much men really hate them, but the putative hatred of men for women can be as nothing compared with the sheer, relentless hatred of women expressed in and by that book. (Children were perhaps the only thing more hateful than women.) What I call the giveaway is perhaps best summed up in this passage:

> The ignorance and isolation of most women mean that they are incapable of making conversation: most of their communication with their spouses is a continuation of the power struggle. The result is that when wives come along to dinner parties they pervert civilized conversation about real issues into personal quarrels. The number of hostesses who wish they did not have to invite wives is legion.

The number of such hostesses may or may not have been legion, but the author of that passage was certainly foremost among them.

To be fair, Germaine Greer was far from alone in her hatred of women. The whole literature of Women's Lib—beginning by all means with Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, considered by many people who have not actually read the book to be a "moderate" plea for women's rights—represents a serious-to-pathological outbreak of self-hatred.

That was why I could not at first understand the hot response among so many well-heeled, well-tended, well-educated women to this explosion of angry declarations of their various incapacities. But it did not take long to see that in all of the women's movement's books and pamphlets there was both a message and an ur-message. In *The Female Eunuch*, for instance, while the message for women was that men have forever been making wrecks of them and they in their weakness have conspired in men's doing so, there is at the same time another message, what I have called the "ur-message," and this one is directed to men. "You have the power to pick on the weak," it goes, "but don't you just wish that you had the manhood to take on a real woman like me. I can talk as tough as you, and I know a lot more about sex."

To my knowledge (which was once considerable), all, or at least most, of the other feminist attacks on men are entirely and single-mindedly hostile, but in their talk of liberation there is an ur-message as well, this time for the women, and it is this implicit message rather than any radical vision of liberation that accounts for the overwhelming response of America's educated middle-class women to the movement. "You are not responsible," sang the sirens of Lib. "Whatever you do that brings you no joy, from living in the suburbs and having babies to hanging out in bars and being promiscuous to spending your days in a job that bores you, is not your fault. They—men, society, your mothers, your fathers—made you do it." What can be more tempting than the notion that no decision taken in your life for which you may harbor some regret was a decision actually taken by you for yourself?

And thus the whining began, cast, to be sure, in the language of social justice and revolutionary determination, but whining all the same. And what comedy it sometimes produced, every bit as risible as watching Germaine Greer throw down the sexual gauntlet to Norman Mailer. For example, hearing members of the first class of women to have been admitted to Yale complaining that they had been socialized to be little girls in pink rather than achievers. For example, reading the published diary of a not untalented liberationist author named Ellen Willis on every page of which was at least one mention of having to do the dishes. (Might she not, instead of spending her time keeping a diary, have gone shopping for a dishwashing machine?) Perhaps most illustrative of all was an exchange at a women's luncheon in a wealthy northern suburb of New York City at which I was the invited speaker. A beautifully turned out and coifed woman wearing a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pink Dior suit rose during the question period and said, "I am sick and tired of having to feel guilty because I so loathe having to wash the toilets." "Madam," I replied to her, "I would be willing to bet the fee for this speech that you have never washed a toilet in your life." She was, of course, unable to demur.

So it went—and went with flying success—in those early years. Now it is three decades later. Young women are being as mercilessly exploited as young men in the white-shoe law firms, girl Marines slog through the mud at Parris Island, and females train for the attempt to land airplanes on aircraft carriers. Women are without opprobrium free to choose as many bedmates, or housemates, as they see fit. And never have the chores that were once so contemptuously referred to as "women's work" (or, in the more elegant parlance of Women's Lib, "s—twork") been so successfully, and even inexpensively, mechanized.

All's right with the world, then—or at least on the way to being all right? Well, no. It seems, for example, that for too long children—having now become women's "choices"—were choices one way and another put off for a bit too long, and a blind and somehow unexpected scramble has set in: to find the man, or to reassure the man already found, or simply to force him to be the provider of this newly longed-for accoutrement to the good life. For another thing, successful careers turn out to be a source not of liberation but of unending worry and demand.

In any case, having created untold confusion in the minds and spirits of America's educated young women by means of imposing measures like affirmative action or the criminalization of an indefinable transaction called "date rape"—along with the establishment of the idea that "society" owes women happiness—the women's movement seems finally to have folded its tent and stolen away to the safety of the university.

Germaine Greer, however, has neither given up nor changed the subject. She has if anything expanded the horizons of her loathing to incorporate all the so-called advances that the women's movement has wrought. That her own influence has had a part in these "advances" is, as far as she is concerned, nothing to the point. In the introduction to her newly published book, *The Whole Woman* (Knopf, 343 pp., $25), she says:

> The contradictions women face have never been more bruising than they are now. The career woman does not know if she is to do her job like a man or like herself. . . . Is motherhood a privilege or a punishment?. . . [F]ake equality is leading women into double jeopardy. . . . It's time to get angry again.

So great, indeed, is Miss Greer's anger these days that it seems to have cost her the articulateness for which she first became famous. The book is a series of disconnected chapters whose only cohesion lies in the fact that each is devoted to some putative horror imposed on women by men and/or the U.S. and/or British governments. Just to recite a few chapter titles might go some way to describing the problem: "Food," "Breast," "Pantomime Dames," "Shopping," "Estrogen," "Testosterone," "Wives," "Loathing," "Girlpower," and so on. Moreover, the text is interrupted throughout, mass-magazine style, with brief "pull quotes," taken from sources ranging from Herbert Spencer to Nina Simone but for the most part from a series of contemporary women whose views on things the author has encountered one way or another. A study of the notes at the back of the book indicates both that Germaine Greer has been at considerable pains to find warrant for her anger and that she has found it not only in a whole variety of books, but also in publications such as the *Journal of Rheumatology*, *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, and other medical journals, and in magazines with names like *Sugar*, *Everywoman*, *Now*, *Minx*, *Woman's Own*, *Women's Art*, *make*, *Simba*, *Scars and Bruises*, *Girlfrenzy*, *Virago*, and finally, and most copiously of all, the *Guardian*. Many works of junk social science, not to say junk journalism, are written this way, but the method in this case somehow feels incongruous with the message.

What is interesting about the hodgepodge of sources, as about the rather incoherent parade of concerns and topics that make up what the author seems to insist is a coherent work, is the way they bespeak a kind of desperation. It is as if the author is at long last desperate to feel some genuine love and respect for women. This eagerness, to be sure, can be signaled in strange ways. She will not, for instance, bring herself to oppose female genital mutilation, since in her view (insofar as one can actually make sense of her view) female circumcision and other like horrors are something frequently practiced and always approved by women themselves. Nor can she bring herself to endorse freedom of abortion, on the grounds that abortions, too, turn out to be means for men to cause suffering to women. But being no great admirer of children, as well as a rather pious leftist, she cannot at the same time endorse the pro-life position. So, in a tone suggesting she has found a wholly satisfying new position, she declares her commitment to . . . "women's choice."

Some of what she writes about is simply tiresome: housework again, and, in a tone that scarcely can be said to reveal any sympathetic understanding, shop-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ping. Some of what she attempts to deal with is scarifying and important—the growing number of young girls who starve themselves or mutilate their bodies—but you cannot, as she attempts to do, even begin to get near the subject from an approach that lays the blame on men and society, as if women were once again just so many handfuls of malleable clay.

And when it comes to men, gone is every last hint of the female provocativeness that added a certain leaven to her analysis. What is left now—perhaps because so many men so easily gave in to her analysis?—is both purely and boringly poisonous.

By the time the book is finished, one is left with the wish to liberate not women but Germaine Greer herself. She seems sunk in what is meant to be pity for her sisters but is in fact little more than low spirits and general bad temper. Her salvation, of course—were she ever to dream of being rescued from her present funk—lies in the discovery that women are deserving neither of her loathing nor of her unqualified admiration. They are, like all people, variously good, bad, and indifferent.

Then she could go back to being her old flirtatious, provocative self, hostess at dinner parties to which wives are not invited—on the off chance that their husbands are still available.

MIDGE DECTER *is a member of the Editorial Board of* FIRST THINGS.

Lights Out

Wasting light, Mother comments,
Seeing high-rise windows lit,
Not really objecting,
Just commenting on empty, lighted offices,
Something that has always seemed
Pleasantly sinister to her,
As off-hand as she sounds,
The start of a mystery.
Meanwhile the electric company
changes its name again,
Wasting the truth, as Mom,
Wasting nothing, stays close to it,
Seeing as much in what happens
When they are not there
As when they are, surrounding
Her in the day, leaving bright towers
At night that tiny immigrant women
Scrub and empty, and where
Anything might happen
Because nothing does.
At midnight they used to walk
By our house, speaking
Cleaning ladies' Esperanto,
And then the lights
Went out.

Lawrence Dugan

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Are We Spiritual Machines?

William A. Dembski

For two hundred years materialist philosophers have argued that man is some sort of machine. The claim began with French materialists of the Enlightenment such as Pierre Cabanis, Julien La Mettrie, and Baron d'Holbach (La Mettrie even wrote a book titled *Man the Machine*). Likewise contemporary materialists like Marvin Minsky, Daniel Dennett, and Patricia Churchland claim that the motions and modifications of matter are sufficient to account for all human experiences, even our interior and cognitive ones. Whereas the Enlightenment philosophes might have thought of humans in terms of gear mechanisms and fluid flows, contemporary materialists think of humans in terms of neurological systems and computational devices. The idiom has been updated, but the underlying impulse to reduce mind to matter remains unchanged.

Materialism remains unsatisfying, however; it seems inadequate to explain our deeper selves. People have aspirations. We long for freedom, immortality, and the beatific vision. We are restless until we find our rest in God. And these longings cannot be satisfied by matter. Our aspirations are, after all, spiritual (the words are even cognates). We need to transcend ourselves to find ourselves, but the motions and modifications of matter offer no opportunity for transcendence. Materialists in times past admitted as much. Freud saw belief in God as wish-fulfillment. Marx saw religion as an opiate. Nietzsche saw Christianity as a pathetic excuse for weakness. Each regarded the hope for transcendence as a delusion.

This hope, however, is not easily excised from the human heart. Even the most hardened materialist shudders at Bertrand Russell's vision of human destiny: "Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving" and which predestine him "to extinction in the vast death of the solar system." The human heart longs for more. And in an age when having it all has become de rigueur, some step forward with a proposal for enjoying the benefits of religion without its ontological burdens. The erstwhile impossible marriage between materialism and spirituality is now consummated, they tell us. Screwtape's "materialist magician" who combines the skepticism of the materialist with the cosmic consciousness of the mystic is here at last.

For the tough-minded materialists of the past, human aspirations were strictly finite and terminated with the death of the individual. Whatever its inadequacies, that materialism was strong, stark, and courageous. It embraced the void, and disdained any impulse to pie in the sky.

Not so for the tender-minded materialists of our age. Though firmly committed to materialism, they are just as firmly committed to not missing out on the benefits ascribed to religious experience. They believe spiritual materialism is now possible, from which it follows that we are spiritual machines. The juxtaposition of spirit and mechanism, which previously would have been regarded as an oxymoron, is now said to constitute a profound insight.

Consider Ray Kurzweil's recent *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence* (Viking, 1999). Kurzweil is a leader in artificial intelligence, specifically in the field of voice-recognition software. Ten years ago he published the more modestly titled *The Age of Intelligent Machines*, where he gave the standard strong artificial intelligence position about machine and human intelligence being functionally equivalent. In *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, however, Kurzweil's aim is no longer to

William A. Dembski *is a fellow of the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture at the Seattle-based Discovery Institute. His new book,* Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology, *will be published in November by InterVarsity.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

show that machines are merely capable of human capacities. Rather, his aim is to show that machines are capable of vastly outstripping human capacities and will do so within the next thirty years.

According to *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, machine intelligence is the next great step in the evolution of intelligence. That man is the most intelligent being at the moment is simply an accident of natural history. Human beings need to be transcended, not by going beyond matter, but by reinstantiating themselves in more efficient forms of matter, to wit, the computer. Kurzweil claims that in the next thirty or so years we shall be able to scan our brains, upload them onto a computer, and thereafter continue our lives as virtual persons running as programs on machines. Since the storage and processing capacities of these virtual persons will far exceed that of the human brain, they will quickly take the lead in all aspects of society. Those humans who refuse to upload themselves will be left in the dust, becoming "pets," as Kurzweil puts it, of the newly evolved computer intelligences. What's more, these computer intelligences will be conditionally immortal, depending for their continued existence only on the ability of hardware to run the relevant software.

Although Kurzweil is at pains to shock his readers with the imminence of a computer takeover, he is hardly alone in seeking immortality through computation. Frank Tipler's *The Physics of Immortality* (1994) is devoted entirely to this topic. Freeman Dyson has pondered it as well. Alan Turing, one of the founders of modern computation, was fascinated with how the distinction between software and hardware illuminated immortality. Turing's friend Christopher Morcom had died when they were teenagers. If Morcom's continued existence depended on his particular embodiment, then he was gone for good. But if he could be instantiated as a computer program (software), Morcom's particular embodiment (hardware) would be largely irrelevant. Identifying personal identity with computer software thus ensured that people were immortal since even though hardware could be destroyed, software resided in a realm of mathematical abstraction and was thus immune to destruction.

Curiously, the impulse to render us spiritual machines comes not just from materialists, but also from theists. Nancey Murphy, a professor of theology at Fuller Seminary, has surprised the Christian community with the news that humans do not have immortal souls capable of existing apart from the body (see her *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, Fortress, 1998). Murphy is less a fan of Kurzweil's computational reductionism than of Patricia Churchland's neurological reductionism. Humans, according to Murphy, are purely physical beings, though as a believer she holds they are also creatures made by God. Human immortality, therefore, consists not in humans having some feature that transcends their physical bodies, but in the fact that God will resurrect them in the coming age. For Murphy, human identity coincides with bodily identity.

Murphy realizes that her view of the human person is at odds with much of the Christian tradition. She therefore tries to bridge the gap by claiming that the traditional Christian dualism of body and soul stems from the Greeks and is not properly part of the Hebraic view of human identity as found in the Old Testament. She also recounts the failure of Descartes' substance dualism to connect body and soul. But to clinch her case she points to recent advances in neuroscience, which to her leave no doubt that we are strictly physical beings. The view of human identity that emerges from her writings is in the end no different from that of the hard-core neuroscientists. To be sure, God is thrown into the mix, religious experience is affirmed, and we have a promise of being resurrected somewhere down the line; but ultimately the only real knowledge about ourselves is what can be extracted from our physical composition and physical circumstances. If Kurzweil spiritualizes the material, then Murphy materializes the spiritual. In both cases we end up with humans as spiritual machines.

A strong case can be made that humans are not machines, period—a case I shall make in due course. Assuming that I am right, it follows that humans are not spiritual machines. Even so, it is interesting to ask what it would mean for a machine to be spiritual. My immediate aim, therefore, is not to refute the claim that humans are spiritual machines, but to show that any spirituality of machines could only be an impoverished spirituality. It's rather like talking about "free prisoners." Whatever else freedom might mean here, it doesn't mean freedom to leave the prison.

By a machine we normally mean an integrated system of parts that function together to accomplish some purpose. To avoid the troubled waters of teleology, let us bracket the question of purpose. In that case we can define a machine as any integrated system of parts whose motions and modifications entirely characterize the system. Implicit in this definition is that all the parts are physical. Consequently a machine is fully determined by the constitution, dynamics, and interrelationships of its physical parts.

This definition is very general. It incorporates artifacts as well as organisms. Because the nineteenth-century Romanticism that separates organisms from machines is still with us, many people shy away from calling organisms machines. But organisms are as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much integrated systems of physical parts as are artifacts. Perhaps "integrated physical systems" would be more precise, but "machines" emphasizes the strict absence of extra-material factors from such systems, and it is that absence which is the point of controversy.

Because machines are integrated systems of parts, they are subject to what I call the replacement principle. This means that physically indistinguishable parts of a machine can be exchanged without altering the machine. At the subatomic level, particles in the same quantum state can be exchanged without altering the subatomic system. At the biochemical level, polynucleotides with the same length and sequence specificity can be exchanged without altering the biochemical system. At the organismal level, identical organs can be exchanged without altering the biological system. At the level of human contrivances, identical components can be exchanged without altering the contrivance.

The replacement principle is relevant here because it implies that machines have no substantive history. As Hilaire Belloc put it, "To comprehend the history of a thing is to unlock the mysteries of its present, and more, to disclose the profundities of its future." But a machine, properly speaking, has no history. What happened to it yesterday is irrelevant; it could easily have been different without altering the machine. If something is a machine, then according to the replacement principle it and a replica of it are identical. Forgeries of the present become masterpieces of the past if the forgeries are good enough. This may not be a problem for art dealers, but it does become a problem when the machines in question are ourselves.

For a machine, all that it is is what it is at this moment. We typically think of our pasts as either remembered or forgotten, and if forgotten then having the possibility of recovery. But machines do not, properly speaking, remember or forget; they only access or fail to access items in storage. What's more, if they fail to access an item, it's either because the retrieval mechanism failed or because the item was erased. Consequently, items that represent past occurrences but were later erased are, as far as the machine is concerned, just as though they never happened. Mutatis mutandis, items that represent counterfactual occurrences (i.e., things that never happened) but which are accessible can be, as far as the machine is concerned, just as though they did happen.

The causal history leading up to a machine is strictly an accidental feature of it. Consequently, any dispositions we ascribe to a machine (e.g., goodness, morality, virtue, and, yes, even spirituality) properly pertain only to its current state and possible future ones, but not to its past. In particular, any defect in a machine relates only to its current state and possible future ones. Correcting that defect is a matter of technology: A machine that was a mass-murderer yesterday may become an angel of mercy today provided we can find a suitable readjustment of its parts. Having at some level come to view ourselves as machines, it is no surprise that we so often make use of technologies like behavior modification, psychotropic drugs, cognitive reprogramming, and genetic engineering, and that we are so sanguine about their effects.

A machine is incapable of sustaining what philosophers call substantial forms. A substantial form is a principle of unity that holds a thing together and maintains its identity over time. Machines lack substantial forms. A machine, though having a past, might just as well not have. A machine, though configured in one way, could just as well be reconfigured in other ways. A machine's defects can be corrected and its virtues improved through technology. Alternatively, new defects can be introduced and old virtues removed through technology. What a machine is now and what it might end up being in the future are entirely open-ended and discontinuous. Despite the buffeting of history, unified things with substantial forms perdure through time. Machines, on the other hand, are the subject of endless tinkering and need bear no semblance to past incarnations.

In this light consider the various possible meanings of "spiritual" in combination with "machine." Since a machine is characterized entirely in terms of its physical parts, "spiritual" cannot refer to some nonphysical aspect of the machine. This is true even for Christian theists like Nancey Murphy, who hold that God created humans and will ultimately resurrect them. For since they also hold that humans are purely physical systems (and thus machines in the sense defined here), it follows that nonphysical factors can provide no insight into human operations. Machines don't care how or by whom they were created. As long as "spiritual" refers to something nonphysical, tacking "spiritual" in front of "machine" tells us nothing substantive about the machine.

If we therefore restrict "spiritual" to some physical aspect of a machine, what might it refer to? Often when we think of someone as spiritual, we think of that person as exhibiting some moral virtue like self-sacrifice, altruism, or courage. But we attribute such virtues only on the basis of past actions; yet past actions belong to history, which is what machines don't have, except accidentally. Consider, for instance, a possible-worlds scenario featuring an ax murderer who just prior to his death has a cerebral accident that changes his brain state into that of Mother Teresa at her most charitable. The ax mur-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

derer now has the brain state of a saint but the past of a sinner. Given the equation of spiritual with moral virtue, and assuming the ax murderer is a machine, is he now a spiritual machine? Suppose Mother Teresa has a cerebral accident just prior to her death that turns her brain state into that of the ax murderer at his most barbaric. Mother Teresa now has the brain state of a sinner but the past of a saint. Assuming Mother Teresa is a machine, is she no longer a spiritual machine?

Such counterfactuals indicate the futility of attributing spirituality to machines on the basis of past actions. Machines that have functioned badly in the past are not sinners and therefore unspiritual. Machines that have functioned well in the past are not saints and therefore spiritual. Machines that have functioned badly in the past need to be fixed. Machines that have functioned well in the past need to be kept in good working order so that they continue to function well. Once a machine has been fixed, it doesn't matter how badly it functioned in the past. On the other hand, once a machine goes haywire, it doesn't matter how well it functioned in the past. Within the Christian tradition the spiritual formation of the human person is an arduous journey whose success depends on human perseverance and divine grace. It is not a technological fix for furnishing our brains with the proper mental state.

Attributing spirituality to machines on the basis of future actions is equally problematic. Clearly, we have access to a machine's future only through its present. Given its present constitution, can we predict what the machine will do in the future? The best we can do is specify certain behavioral propensities. But even the best machines break and malfunction—it is impossible to predict the full range of stresses that a machine may encounter and that may cause it not to work. For every machine there are circumstances sure to lead to its undoing. Calling a machine "spiritual" in reference to its future can therefore refer only to certain propensities of the machine to function in certain ways. But spirituality of this sort is better left to a bookie than to a priest or guru.

Since the future of a machine is accessed through its present, it follows that attributing spirituality to machines properly refers to some present physical aspect of the machine. But what aspect might this be? What is it about the constitution, dynamics, and interrelationships of a machine's parts that renders it spiritual? What emergent property of a system of physical parts corresponds to spirituality? Suppose humans are machines. Does an ecstatic religious experience, an LSD drug trip, a Maslow peak experience, or a period of silence, prayer, and meditation count as a spiritual experience? I suppose if we are playing a Wittgensteinian language game, this usage is okay. But however we choose to classify these experiences, it remains that machine spirituality is the spirituality of immediate experience. This is of course consistent with much of contemporary spirituality, which places a premium on religious experience and neglects such traditional aspects of spirituality as revelation, tradition, virtue, morality, and above all communion with a nonphysical God who transcends our physical being.

Machine spirituality neglects much that traditionally has been classified under spirituality. From this alone it would follow that machine spirituality is an impoverished form of spirituality. But the problem is worse. Machine spirituality fails on its own terms as a phenomenology of religious experience. The spiritual experience of a machine is necessarily poorer than the spiritual experience of a being that communes with God. The entire emphasis of Judeo-Christian spirituality is on communion with a free, personal, transcendent God. Moreover, communion with God always presupposes a free act by God to commune with us. Freedom here means that God can refuse to commune with us (to, as the Scriptures say, "hide his face"). Thus, within traditional spirituality we are aware of God's presence because God has freely chosen to make his presence known to us. Truly spiritual persons, saints, experience a constant, habitual awareness of God's presence.

But how can a machine be aware of God's presence? Recall that machines are entirely defined by the constitution, dynamics, and interrelationships among their physical parts. It follows that God cannot make his presence known to a machine by acting upon it and thereby changing its state. Indeed, the moment God acts upon a machine to change its state, it no longer properly is a machine, for an aspect of the machine now transcends its physical constituents. If we are machines, then, we cannot say that God reveals his presence to us, and any awareness we have of God's presence must be explained in some other way. Which means that the awareness must be self-induced, must come from us rather than from God. Machine spirituality is the spirituality of self-realization, not the spirituality of an active God who freely gives himself in self-revelation and thereby transforms the beings with which he is in communion. I therefore maintain that modifying "machine" with "spiritual" entails an impoverished view of spirituality.

The question remains whether humans are machines (with or without the adjective "spiritual" tacked in front). To answer this question, we need first to examine how materialism understands

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

human agency and, more generally, intelligent agency. Although the materialist literature that attempts to account for human agency is vast, the materialist's options are in fact quite limited. The materialist world is not a mind-first world. Intelligent agency is therefore in no sense prior to or independent of the material world. Intelligent agency is a derivative mode of causation that depends on underlying natural—and therefore unintelligent—causes. Human agency in particular supervenes on underlying natural processes, which in turn usually are identified with brain function.

How well have natural processes been able to account for intelligent agency? Cognitive scientists have achieved nothing like a full reduction. The French Enlightenment thinker Pierre Cabanis remarked: "*Les nerfs—voilà tout l'homme*" (the nerves—that's all there is to man). A full reduction of intelligent agency to natural causes would give a complete account of human behavior, intention, and emotion in terms of neural processes. Nothing like this has been achieved. No doubt, neural processes are correlated with behavior, intention, and emotion. But correlation is not causation.

Anger presumably is correlated with certain localized brain excitations. But localized brain excitations hardly explain anger any better than overt behaviors associated with anger, like shouting obscenities. Localized brain excitations may be reliably correlated with anger, but what accounts for one person interpreting a comment as an insult and experiencing anger, and another person interpreting that same comment as a joke and experiencing laughter? A full materialist account of mind needs to understand localized brain excitations in terms of other localized brain excitations. Instead we find localized brain excitations (representing, say, anger) having to be explained in terms of semantic contents (representing, say, insults). But this mixture of brain excitations and semantic contents hardly constitutes a materialist account of mind or intelligent agency.

Lacking a full reduction of intelligent agency to natural processes, cognitive scientists speak of intelligent agency as supervening on natural processes. Supervenience here means a hierarchical relationship between higher order processes (in this case intelligent agency) and lower order processes (in this case natural processes). What supervenience implies is that the relationship between the higher and lower order processes is a one-way street, with the lower determining the higher. To say, for instance, that intelligent agency supervenes on neurophysiology is to say that once all the facts about neurophysiology are in place, all the facts about intelligent agency are determined as well. Supervenience makes no pretense at reductive analysis. It simply asserts that the lower level determines the higher level—how it does it, we don't know.

Certainly, if we knew that materialism were correct, then supervenience would follow. But materialism itself is at issue. Neuroscience, for instance, is nowhere near underwriting materialism, and that despite its strident rhetoric. Hardcore neuroscientists, for instance, refer disparagingly to the ordinary psychology of beliefs, desires, and emotions as "folk psychology." The implication is that just as "folk medicine" had to give way to "real medicine," so "folk psychology" will have to give way to a revamped psychology grounded in neuroscience. In place of the psychologist's couch, where we talk out our beliefs, desires, and emotions, tomorrow's healers of the soul will ignore such outdated categories and manipulate brain states directly.

At least so the story goes. Actual neuroscience research is by contrast a much more modest affair and fails to support such vaulting ambitions. That should hardly surprise us. The neurophysiology of our brains is incredibly plastic and has proven notoriously difficult to correlate with intentional states. Louis Pasteur, for instance, despite suffering a cerebral accident, continued to enjoy a flourishing scientific career. When his brain was examined after he died, it was discovered that half the brain had atrophied. How does one explain a flourishing intellectual life despite a severely damaged brain if mind and brain coincide?

Or consider a more striking example. The December 12, 1980 issue of *Science* contained an article by Roger Lewin titled "Is Your Brain Really Necessary?" In the article, Lewin reported a case study by John Lorber, a British neurologist and professor at Sheffield University:

> "There's a young student at this university," says Lorber, "who has an IQ of 126, has gained a first-class honors degree in mathematics, and is socially completely normal. And yet the boy has virtually no brain." The student's physician at the university noticed that the youth had a slightly larger than normal head, and so referred him to Lorber, simply out of interest. "When we did a brain scan on him," Lorber recalls, "we saw that instead of the normal 4.5-centimeter thickness of brain tissue between the ventricles and the cortical surface, there was just a thin layer of mantle measuring a millimeter or so. His cranium is filled mainly with cerebrospinal fluid."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Against such anomalies, Cabanis' dictum, "the nerves—that's all there is to man," hardly inspires confidence. Yet as Thomas Kuhn has taught us, a science that is progressing fast and furiously is not about to be derailed by a few anomalies. Neuroscience is a case in point. For all the obstacles it faces in trying to reduce intelligent agency to natural causes, neuroscience persists in the Promethean determination to show that mind does ultimately reduce to neurophysiology. Absent a prior commitment to materialism, this determination will seem misguided. On the other hand, given a prior commitment to materialism, this determination becomes readily understandable.

But not obligatory. Most cognitive scientists do not rest their hopes with neuroscience. Yes, if materialism is correct, then a reduction of intelligent agency to neurophysiology is in principle possible. The sheer difficulty, both experimental and theoretical, of even attempting this reduction, however, leaves many cognitive scientists looking for a more manageable field in which to invest their energies. As it turns out, the field of choice is computer science, and especially its subdiscipline of artificial intelligence. Unlike brains, computers are neat and precise. Also unlike brains, computers and their programs can be copied and mass-produced. Inasmuch as science thrives on replicability and control, computer science offers tremendous practical advantages over neurological research.

Whereas the goal of neuroscience is to reduce intelligent agency to neurophysiology, the goal of artificial intelligence is to reduce intelligent agency to computation. The idea is to develop a computational system that equals or, if we are to believe Ray Kurzweil, exceeds human intelligence. Since computers operate deterministically, reducing intelligent agency to computation would indeed constitute a materialistic reduction of intelligent agency. Cognitive scientists would still have the task of showing in what sense brain function is computational (that is, Marvin Minsky's dictum "the mind is a computer made of meat" would still need to be verified), but they would be much closer than the neuroscientists are now.

So can computation explain intelligent agency? First off, let's be clear: no actual computer system has come anywhere near to simulating the full range of capacities we associate with human intelligent agency. Yes, computers can do certain narrowly circumscribed tasks exceedingly well (like play chess). But require a computer to make a decision based on incomplete information and calling for common sense, and the computer will be lost. Artificial intelligence researchers call this the frame problem, the problem of getting a computer to find the appropriate frame of reference for solving a problem.

Consider, for instance, the following story: A man enters a bar. The bartender asks, "What can I do for you?" The man responds, "I'd like a glass of water." The bartender pulls out a gun and shouts, "Get out of here!" The man says "thank you" and leaves. End of story. What is the appropriate frame of reference? No, this isn't a story by Franz Kafka. The key item of information needed to make sense of this story is this: The man has the hiccups. By going to the bar to get a drink of water, the man hoped to cure his hiccups. The bartender, however, decided on a more radical cure. By terrifying the man with a gun, the bartender cured the man's hiccups immediately. Cured of his hiccups, the man was grateful and left. Humans are able to understand the appropriate frame of reference for such stories immediately. Computers, on the other hand, haven't a clue.

Ah, but just wait. Give an army of clever programmers enough time, funding, and computational power, and just see if they don't solve the frame problem. Materialists are forever issuing such promissory notes, claiming that a conclusive confirmation of materialism is right around the corner—just give our scientists a bit more time and money. John Polkinghorne refers to this practice as "promissory materialism." But a promissory note need only be taken seriously if there is good reason to think that it can be paid. And the fact is that the artificial intelligence community has offered no compelling reason for thinking that it will ever solve the frame problem.

In sum, the empirical evidence for a materialist reduction of intelligent agency is wholly lacking. Indeed, the only thing materialist reductions of intelligent agency have until recently had in their favor is Occam's razor, which has been used to argue that materialist accounts of mind are to be preferred because they are simplest. Yet even Occam's razor, that great materialist mainstay, is proving small comfort these days. Specifically, recent developments in the theory of intelligent design are providing principled grounds against the reduction of intelligent agency to natural causes (cf. my October 1998 article in FIRST THINGS titled "Science and Design").

To this point I have argued that attributing spirituality to machines entails an impoverished view of spirituality, and that the empirical evidence doesn't confirm that machines can bring about minds. But if not machines, what then? What else could the mind be except an effect of matter? Or, in the words of Nancey Murphy, what else could the soul be except "a functional capacity of a complex physical organism"? It's not that scientists have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

traced the workings of the brain and discovered how brain states induce mental states. It's rather that scientists have run out of places to look, and that matter seems the only possible redoubt for mind.

The only alternative to a materialist conception of mind appears to be a Cartesian dualism of spiritual substances that interact preternaturally with material objects. We are left either with a sleek materialism that derives mind from matter or a bloated dualism that makes mind a substance separate from matter. Given this choice, almost no one these days opts for substance dualism. Substance dualism offers two fundamentally different substances, matter and spirit, with no coherent means of interaction. Hence the popularity of reducing mind to matter.

But the choice between materialism and substance dualism is ill-posed. Both are wedded to the same defective view of matter. Both view matter as primary and law-governed. This renders materialism self-consistent since it allows matter to be conceived mechanistically. On the other hand, it renders substance dualism incoherent since undirected natural laws provide no opening for the activity of spiritual substances. But the problem in either case is that matter ends up taking precedence over concrete things. We do not have knowledge of matter but of *things*. As Bishop Berkeley rightly taught, matter is always an abstraction. Matter is what remains once we remove all the features peculiar to a thing. Consequently, matter becomes stripped not only of all empirical particularity but also of any substantial form that would otherwise order it and render it intelligible.

The way out of the materialism-dualism dilemma is to refuse the artificial world of matter governed by natural laws and return to the real world of things governed by the principles appropriate to them. These principles may include physical laws, but they need hardly be coextensive with them. Within this richer world of both material and nonmaterial things, physical laws lose their status as absolutes and become subject to principles that may be quite meta-physical (principles like intelligent agency and divine providence).

Within this richer world, the obsession to seek mind in matter quickly dissipates. According to materialism (and here I'm thinking specifically of the scientific materialism that currently dominates Western thought), the world is fundamentally an interacting system of mindless entities (be they particles, strings, fields, or whatever). Accordingly, only atomistic, reductionistic, and mechanistic science is available to study the mind. After things are reduced to their mindless parts, equally mindless principles of association known as natural laws allow them to assemble in ever greater orders of complexity (even the widely touted "laws of self-organization" fall in here). But the world is a much richer place than materialism allows, and there is no reason to saddle ourselves with an artificially sparse ontology.

The great mistake in trying to understand the mind-body problem is to suppose that it is a scientific problem. It is not. It is a problem of ontology (i.e., that branch of philosophy concerned with what exists). If all that exists is matter governed by natural laws, then humans are machines. If all that exists is matter governed by natural laws together with spiritual substances that are incapable of coherently interacting with matter, then, once again, humans are machines. But if matter is merely an abstraction gotten by removing all the features peculiar to unified things, then there is no reason to think that combining it with natural laws (or anything else for that matter) will entail the recovery of things. And in that case, there is no reason to think that humans are machines.

Owen Barfield described the material or the physical as a "dashboard" that mediates things to us. But the mediation is fundamentally incomplete, for the dashboard can only mirror certain aspects of reality, and that imperfectly. Materialism deconstructs the things of this world, and then tries to reconstitute them. Yet it can never put things back together again. This is not for want of cleverness on the part of materialists. It is rather that reality is too rich and the mauling it receives from materialism too severe for even the cleverest materialist to put things right. Materialism itself is the problem, not the brand of materialism one happens to endorse.

Over a hundred years ago William James saw clearly that science would never resolve the mind-body problem. In his *Principles of Psychology* he argued that neither empirical evidence nor scientific reasoning would settle this question. Instead, he foresaw an interminable debate between competing philosophies, with no side gaining a clear advantage. The following passage captures the state of cognitive science today:

> We are thrown back therefore upon the crude evidences of introspection on the one hand, with all its liabilities to deception, and, on the other hand, upon a priori postulates and probabilities. He who loves to balance nice doubts need be in no hurry to decide the point. Like Mephistopheles to Faust, he can say to himself, "*dazu hast du noch eine lange Frist*" [for that you've got a long wait], for from generation to generation the reasons adduced on both sides will grow more voluminous, and the discussion more refined. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Proposing Courtship

Amy A. Kass and Leon R. Kass

Anyone interested in improving relations between men and women today and tomorrow must proceed by taking a page from yesterday. For today's tale regarding manhood and womanhood is, alas, both too brief and hardly edifying. True, as they multiply taboos on speech and gesture, our sexual harassment police emphatically prescribe how not to behave toward the opposite sex. But outside of certain strongly religious communities, we have no clearly defined positive mores and manners that teach men how to be men in relation to women and women how to be women in relation to men. What instruction there is for relations between the sexes is largely gender-neutral: respect the other person's freedom, avoid sexist speech and unwanted advances, be sincere, sensitive, and caring. Even the prominent descriptions of pairing-off are neutered and unerotic: people have a relationship, not a romance, with a partner or a significant other, not a lover or a beloved. In our increasingly androgynous age, sexual speech and mores are designed to fit all couples, homo- and heterosexual, and all manners of intimacy, serious or frivolous.

Amy A. Kass, *Senior Lecturer in the Humanities Collegiate Division at the University of Chicago, is the author of* American Lives: Cultural Differences, Individual Distinction. Leon R. Kass, *Addie Clark Harding Professor in the College and the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago and Wm. H. Brady, Jr. Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of* The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature. *Mr. and Mrs. Kass are editors of a forthcoming anthology,* Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying, *to be published in January 2000 by the University of Notre Dame Press, in a series on the Ethics of Everyday Life produced under the auspices of the Institute on Religion and Public Life with the support of the Lilly Endowment. The excerpts from Erasmus' Colloquy, taken from Volume 39 of* The Collected Works of Erasmus, *are used with permission of the University of Toronto Press.*

Though maleness and femaleness are natural facts, manhood and womanhood are, as fashionable opinion insists, culturally constructed norms, at least to some degree. It is no accident that the meaning of being a man or being a woman has been radically transformed in a society that celebrates freedom and equality, encourages individualism and autonomy, rejects tradition, practices contraception and abortion, sees marriage as a lifestyle, provides the same education and promotes the same careers for men and women, homogenizes fathers and mothers in the neutered work of "parenting," denies vulnerability and dependence, keeps mortality out of sight, and raises its children without any sense of duty or obligation to future generations. The roots of these cultural ideas and practices lie deeper than the sexual revolution, feminism, and the sixties, and it is naive to think that we can easily reverse their influence with some newly designed mores and manners, like the return of ballroom dancing or single-sex dormitories or romantic ballads, welcome though these changes might be. Truth to tell, most of us would not want to roll back the clock even if we could, and we certainly don't want to abandon modern liberal democratic society, equal opportunities for women, or the easier ways of life made possible by the scientific-technological project. This means that even conservatives are looking for reform on the cheap, a revival of good sense and decency in the relations between the sexes without sacrificing any of the privileges and luxuries of modern life. We strongly suspect this is impossible.

But even if no one can prescribe a good remedy, we are no longer in denial about whether the patient is sick. In the last half-decade we have witnessed the rise of discontent, mainly among women, with the present arrangements between the sexes. Many women, and not a few men, are revolted by the hook-up culture and are looking for alternatives: they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

want real intimacy, they want enduring relationships, they want marriage. The popularity of the best-selling advice books, *The Rules* and *Mars and Venus on a Date*, the recently published books by Wendy Shalit on modesty, by Joshua Harris on why he kissed dating good-bye, and by Danielle Crittenden on what our mothers didn't tell us, and the college-campus project to "Take Back the Date" just begun by the Independent Women's Forum are important signs that many people—again especially women—are eager for lasting relationships with the opposite sex based on romance and mutual respect, fidelity and friendship. Whether they know it or not, what they want is a revival of some form of courtship, with established modes of speech and deed whose goal is marriage.

Anyone interested in developing new mores and manners pointing toward marriage needs to understand what these mores once were, and, even more, what they were trying to achieve. In addition, young people need to acquire the sensibilities, tastes, and skills in reading character that can help them find and judge prospective mates—something they once gained from the study of fine literature and which they can never hope to learn from watching *Seinfeld* or *Ally McBeal*. To explore the now lost practices of courtship, and to encourage the relevant sensibilities, we several years ago offered a seminar on the subject at the University of Chicago. We were moved to do so after two decades of observing, with growing sadness, the frustrations and disappointments of our students and former students as they passed through the decade of their twenties failing to find the life-partner they longed for or the private happiness that is based on lasting intimacy. The success of our seminar, in which we read and discussed selections mostly from old books, inspired us to prepare an anthology of readings on courting and marrying, designed to help people of marriageable age become more thoughtful about what they are and should be doing.

Among the most helpful readings for these purposes is Erasmus' Colloquy on courtship (written in 1523), a compressed dramatic enactment in which Erasmus is depicting not so much what was happening in his day as what he thought ought to happen. It provides a useful mirror in which we can both see the deficiencies of our situation, and, at the same time, look for basic principles of courtship that might still be necessary and desirable today. By reviewing and commenting on major portions of the Colloquy, we seek to show, by example, how pondering old texts can contribute to the search for positive manners and mores, especially in an age where none are available.

On first or even second reading, Erasmus' Colloquy will no doubt strike most modern readers as quaint or irrelevant, at best. We hope to demonstrate why it can and should be taken seriously, not because it offers a pattern readily importable to modern times, but because it addresses, whether we recognize them or not, what are still the most important issues: 1) how to transform brutish sexual appetite into human loving; 2) how to make a manly man interested in marriage and attached to his children; 3) how to help a woman negotiate between her erotic desires and her concern for progeny; 4) how to enable men to find and win, how to enable women to select and hold the right person for lasting marriage; 5) how to locate the relations of men and women in the larger contexts of human life—familial, political, religious. More up-to-date mores and manners that do not come to terms with these issues will not get the job done. The Colloquy should command our attention also because it illustrates what may be the central truth about sexual manners and mores: it is women who control and teach them.

Pamphilus and Maria meet in the evening in the vicinity of Maria's family home, probably neither by prior arrangement nor entirely by chance. Pamphilus (whose name means "all-loving" or "loving all") appears at first to be a foolish, moonstruck lover, quite beside himself in love. Although it later will emerge that he is willing to marry, Pamphilus is eager to win Maria (named after the Virgin) here and now, and he presses his suit—in speech and manner—after the conventions of love poetry. Maria, by contrast, appears from the start to be utterly sensible and self-possessed; witty, sharp, and charming, she almost immediately assumes control. She will direct the conversation from the conventions of love poetry to the conventions of marriage. The beginning establishes both the tone and the starting points of the courtship.

> Pamphilus. Hello, hello, and hello—you cruel, hardhearted, unyielding creature!
>
> Maria. Hello yourself, Pamphilus, as often and as much as you like, and by whatever name you please. But sometimes I think you've forgotten my name. It's Maria.
>
> Pamph. Well, you should have been named Martia.
>
> Maria. Why so? What have I to do with Mars?
>
> Pamph. You slay men for sport, as the god does. Except that you're more pitiless than Mars: you kill even a lover.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Maria. Mind what you're saying. Where's this heap of men I've slain? Where's the blood of the slaughtered?

Pamph. You've only to look at me to see one lifeless corpse.

Maria. What do I hear? You talk and walk when you're dead? I hope I never meet more fearsome ghosts!

Pamph. You're joking, but all the same you're the death of poor me, and you kill more cruelly than if you pierced with a spear. Now, alas, I'm just skin and bones from long torture.

Maria. Well, well! Tell me, how many pregnant women have miscarried at the sight of you?

Pamph. But my pallor shows I've less blood than any ghost.

Maria. Yet this pallor is streaked with lavender. You're as pale as a ripening cherry or a purple grape.

Pamph. Shame on you for making fun of a miserable wretch!

Maria. But if you don't believe me, bring a mirror.

Pamph. I want no other mirror, nor do I think any could be brighter than the one in which I'm looking at myself now.

Maria. What mirror are you talking about?

Pamph. Your eyes.

Pamphilus opens by greeting Maria not by name but as "you cruel, hardhearted, unyielding creature": he finds her cruel because she is hard-hearted, and hard-hearted because she is unyielding. From the man's point of view, the woman's crime in love is her steadfast refusal to yield to a wooer's importunings. Indeed, after Maria greets him by name and playfully reminds him of her own, Pamphilus sees in her name not the Virgin but the pagan deity Mars: Maria appears to him not merely unrelenting but positively warlike, martially aggressive in defense of her virginity.

Maria's lighthearted defense and skillful repartee soon make Pamphilus blush ("You're as pale as a ripening cherry") and then embarrassed by this involuntary self-revelation ("Shame on you for making fun of a miserable wretch!"); blushing and embarrassment are good signs, indicating that a man seeks not only a woman's acquiescence but also her esteem. Yet even in this respect Pamphilus remains self-absorbed. In looking at Maria's eyes, he literally and figuratively sees only himself. Trafficking in his own poor, wretched, lovelorn state, he seems as much in love with love as he does with Maria.

Despite her steady resistance, Maria is obviously attracted to Pamphilus—just listen to the way she eggs him on—but, serious in her playfulness, she never forgets who she is or what she wants, not only here and now but also especially hereafter. Exploiting his ardor and her self-restraint, she employs her considerable wit to bring Pamphilus round to seeing things from her point of view.

Maria. . . . But how do you prove you're lifeless? Do ghosts eat?

Pamph. Yes, but they eat insipid stuff, as I do.

Maria. What do they eat, then?

Pamph. Mallows, leeks, and lupins.

Maria. But you don't abstain from capons and partridges.

Pamph. True, but they taste no better to my palate than if I were eating mallows, or beets without pepper, wine, and vinegar.

Maria. Poor you! Yet all the time you're putting on weight. And do dead men talk too?

Pamph. Like me, in a very thin, squeaky voice.

Maria. When I heard you wrangling with your rival not long ago, though, your voice wasn't so thin and squeaky. But I ask you, do ghosts even walk? Wear clothes? Sleep?

Pamph. They even sleep together—though after their own fashion.

Maria. Well! Witty fellow, aren't you?

Pamph. But what will you say if I demonstrate with Achillean proofs that I'm dead and you're a murderer?

Maria. Perish the thought, Pamphilus! But proceed to your argument.

Pamph. In the first place, you'll grant, I suppose, that death is nothing but the removal of soul from body?

Maria. Granted. . . .

Pamph. Then you won't deny that whoever robs another of his soul is a murderer?

Maria. I allow it.

Pamph. You'll concede also what's affirmed by the most respected authors and endorsed by the assent of so many ages: that man's soul is not where it animates but where it loves?

Maria. Explain this more simply. I don't follow your meaning well enough. . . .

Pamph. Men seized by a divine inspiration neither hear nor see nor smell nor feel, even if you kill them.

Maria. Yes, I've heard that.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pamph. What do you suppose is the reason?

Maria. You tell me, professor.

Pamph. Obviously because their spirit is in heaven, where it possesses what it ardently loves, and is absent from the body.

Maria. What of it?

Pamph. What of it, you unfeeling girl? It follows both that I'm dead and that you're the murderer.

Maria. Where's your soul, then?

Pamph. Where it loves.

Maria. But who robbed you of your soul?—Why do you sigh? Speak freely; I won't hold it against you.

Pamph. Cruelest of girls, whom nevertheless I can't hate even if I'm dead!

Maria. Naturally. But why don't you in turn deprive her of *her* soul—tit for tat, as they say?

Pamph. I'd like nothing better if the exchange could be such that her spirit migrated to my breast, as my spirit has gone over completely to her body.

Maria. But may I, in turn, play the sophist with you?

Pamph. The sophistress.

Maria. It isn't possible for the same body to be living and lifeless, is it?

Pamph. No, not at the same time.

Maria. When the soul's gone, then the body's dead?

Pamph. Yes.

Maria. It doesn't animate except when it's present?

Pamph. Exactly.

Maria. Then how does it happen that although the soul's there where it loves, it nevertheless animates the body left behind? If it animates that body even when it loves elsewhere, how can the animated body be called lifeless?

Pamph. You dispute cunningly enough, but you won't catch me with such snares. The soul that somehow or other governs the body of a lover is incorrectly called soul, since actually it consists of certain slight remnants of soul—just as the scent of roses remains in your hand even if the rose is taken away. . . .

Maria. Now don't begrudge an answer to this, too: do you love willingly or unwillingly?

Pamph. Willingly.

Maria. Then since one is free not to love, whoever loves seems to be a self-murderer. To blame the girl is unjust.

Pamph. Yet the girl doesn't kill by being loved but by failing to return the love. Whoever can save someone and refrains from doing so is guilty of murder.

Maria. Suppose a young man loves what is forbidden, for example another man's wife or a Vestal Virgin? *She* won't return his love in order to save the lover, will she?

Pamph. But *this* young man loves what it's lawful and right, and reasonable and honorable, to love. . . .

First, Maria attempts to turn Pamphilus' attention away from his poetic flights of fancy by encouraging him to take stock of his concrete, living self. To his insistence that his soul has fled his body, she repeatedly calls attention to his own evident embodiment and animation. To his claim that she is responsible for his suffering, she makes him confess that he loves willingly, reminding him of his free agency ("Then since one is free not to love, whoever loves seems to be a self-murderer"). When he then protests that the girl kills not "by being loved but by failing to return the love," she cunningly asks: "Suppose a young man loves what is forbidden, for example, another man's wife or a Vestal Virgin? *She* won't return his love in order to save the lover, will she?" Pamphilus is compelled, for the first time, to acknowledge that love must bow before what is licit and honorable: "But *this* young man," Pamphilus barks, "loves what it's lawful and right, and reasonable and honorable, to love."

But Pamphilus quickly backtracks: "and yet he [i.e., Pamphilus the licit lover] *is* slain." When he next adds to the crime of murder (that is, of not returning his love) the charge of poisoning or sorcery (that is, displaying her charms), Maria denies all responsibility, cleverly pointing out that the witchcraft must be in the eye of the beholder, since only he is smitten by her look. Summoning all his manly wit and ardor, Pamphilus proceeds to bring Maria before the high court of Venus. Borrowing from the tragedians of old, he wants her to recognize the monstrous erotic woes that might befall someone who rejects the love of such a worthy suitor as himself. Warning her that Eros might punish her by fixing her own passionate attachment on a hideously ugly, bankrupt, and beastly man, and insisting that he as a lover should be rewarded for loving, he concludes with a dire warning and a plea: "Don't provoke Nemesis; return your lover's love." We have reached a major turning point in the courtship.

Pamph. Then don't provoke Nemesis: return your lover's love.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MARIA. If that's enough, I do return it.

PAMPH. But I'd want this love to be lasting and to be mine alone. I'm courting a wife, not a mistress.

MARIA. I know that, but I must deliberate a long time over what can't be revoked once it's begun.

PAMPH. *I've* thought it over a very long time.

MARIA. See that love, who's not the best adviser, doesn't trick you. For they say he's blind.

PAMPH. But one who proceeds with caution is keen-sighted. You don't appear to me as you do because I love you; I love you because I've observed what you're like.

MARIA. But you may not know me well enough. If you wore the shoe, you'd feel then where it pinched.

PAMPH. I'll have to take the chance; though I infer from many signs that the match will succeed.

MARIA. You're a soothsayer too?

PAMPH. I am.

MARIA. Then by what auguries do you infer this? Has the night owl flown?

PAMPH. That flies for fools.

MARIA. Has a pair of doves flown from the right?

PAMPH. Nothing of the sort. But the integrity of your parents has been known to me for years now. In the first place, good birth is far from a bad sign. Nor am I unaware of the wholesome instruction and godly examples by which you've been reared; and good education is better than good birth. That's another sign. In addition, between my family—not an altogether contemptible one, I believe—and yours there has long been intimate friendship. In fact, you and I have known each other, as they say, from our cradle days, and our temperaments are pretty much the same. We're nearly equal in age; our parents, in wealth, reputation, and rank. Finally—and this is the special mark of friendship, since excellence by itself is no guarantee of compatibility—your tastes seem to fit my temperament not at all badly. How mine agree with yours, I don't know.

Obviously, darling, these omens assure me that we shall have a blessed, lasting, happy marriage, provided you don't intend to sing a song of woe for our prospects.

MARIA. What song do you want?

PAMPH. I'll play "I am yours"; you chime in with "I am yours."

MARIA. A short song, all right, but it has a long finale.

PAMPH. What matter how long, if only it be joyful?

Maria, who has all the while been waiting for the just right opening, sees it and moves right in. When challenged to "return your lover's love," she responds coolly and almost offhandedly, "If that's enough, I do return it." Nothing more rankles a man bent on a genuine victory than too easy or casual a concession, and so it is with Pamphilus. "But I'd want this love to be lasting and to be mine alone," he insists, and adds, in a first-time confession, "I'm courting a wife, not a mistress." "I know that," Maria replies, again offhandedly, pretending that she had assumed all along that marriage was uppermost in his mind. Maria has gotten Pamphilus' speech to move from the realm of love to the domain of marriage, seen as the home of enduring and exclusive attachment ("love . . . lasting and . . . mine alone"). She next turns him into matrimony's leading defender. By obliging *him* to make the case for marriage, through addressing her feigned reservations and genuine concerns, she deftly compels Pamphilus to show whether and why he is in fact a suitable husband.

She begins by insisting on the need for careful deliberation if one is interested in lasting marriage: "But I must deliberate a long time over what can't be revoked once it's begun." Pamphilus, taking the bait, confidently steps forward to show his apparent superiority in thoughtfulness: "*I've* thought it over a very long time." In response, Maria sets the hook: "See that love, who's not the best adviser, doesn't trick you"—or, in other words, prove it.

In a lovely ironic twist, Pamphilus, in order to satisfy his own desire for victory, must now explain to Maria why she ought willingly, indeed, ardently, to accept him as a husband. In doing so, he not only explains that his love of Maria is based on esteem and regard—"You don't appear to me as you do because I love you; I love you because I've observed what you're like"—but, more importantly, he defends, over and against Maria's objections, the very things that Maria, all along, deems lawful and right, reasonable and honorable: exclusive love, marital permanence, children and family ties. Pamphilus is made to enumerate the signs that promise marital success: her good birth and good education, the friendship of their respective families, their own lifelong and intimate acquaintance, similar temperaments, equal age, and, especially, the likelihood of friendship based on compatible tastes.

Maria, still suspecting that he is moved mainly by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her looks, forces him to face the threats that disease and old age pose to her beauty:

> Maria. Maybe I'll seem different to you when illness or old age has changed this beauty.
>
> Pamph. Neither will I always be as handsome as I am now, my dear. But I don't consider only this dwelling place, which is blooming and charming in every respect. I love the guest more.
>
> Maria. What guest?
>
> Pamph. Your mind, whose beauty will forever increase with age.
>
> Maria. Truly you're more than a Lynceus if you see through so much make-up!
>
> Pamph. I see your mind through mine. Besides, we'll renew our youth repeatedly in our children.

Pamphilus makes a double response to her concern about fading beauty: more than its "dwelling place," he says first, he loves her mind, "whose beauty will forever increase with age"; and he adds, second, "[b]esides, we'll renew our youth repeatedly in our children." In this crucial second remark, Pamphilus, speaking no longer of "I" but of "we," tacitly concedes their mortality and confesses a desire for children, indeed, for "*our* children."

But though these remarks are music to her ears, Maria does not let on that she is pleased; on the contrary, she makes explicit, for the first time, the ever-latent theme of her threatened virginity:

> Maria. But meantime my virginity is gone.
>
> Pamph. True, but see here: if you had a fine orchard, would you want it never to bear anything but blossoms or would you prefer, after the blossoms have fallen, to see the trees heavy with ripe fruit?
>
> Maria. How he prattles!
>
> Pamph. Answer this at least: which is the prettier sight, a vine rotting on the ground or encircling some post or elm tree and weighing it down with purple grapes?
>
> Maria. *You* answer *me* in turn: which is the more pleasing sight, a rose gleaming white on its bush or plucked and gradually withering?
>
> Pamph. In my opinion the rose that withers in a man's hand, delighting his eyes and nostrils the while, is luckier than one that grows old on a bush. For that one too would wither sooner or later. In the same way, wine is better if drunk before it sours. But a girl's flower doesn't fade the instant she marries. On the contrary, I see many girls who before marriage were pale, run-down, and as good as gone. The sexual side of marriage brightened them so much that they began to bloom at last.
>
> Maria. Yet virginity wins universal approval and applause.
>
> Pamph. A maiden is something charming, but what's more unnatural than an old maid? Unless your mother had been deflowered, we wouldn't have this blossom here. But if, as I hope, our marriage will not be barren, we'll pay for one virgin with many.
>
> Maria. But they say chastity is a thing most pleasing to God.
>
> Pamph. And therefore I want to marry a chaste girl, to live chastely with her. . . .

Maria here strategically exploits the major weapon in her arsenal, her chastity. By linking the loss of her virginity not to the satisfaction of erotic desire but to procreation, she compels Pamphilus to become simultaneously a respectful defender of her chastity and a proponent of the proper reason for its sacrifice. Pamphilus is made to argue for the superiority not of eros but of its procreative fruit. Once he does so, Maria herself aggressively turns the tables and makes Pamphilus speak to the matter of eros in the face of lost maidenhood: "You answer me in turn: which is the more pleasing sight, a rose gleaming white on its bush or plucked and gradually withering?" Translation: Will you still love me once I have yielded, once I am an aging mother, no longer a virginal maiden?

Maria's remark makes clear that chastity has been her prime concern not because she lacks sexual desire; on the contrary, the ardor with which she argues utterly belies her seeming coolness. Neither does she esteem her virginity because, as she suggests, "it wins universal approval and applause," nor because "it is a thing most pleasing to God"—these opinions she puts into the mouths of others ("they say . . ."). Rather, as one can see fully only at the end of the Colloquy, her virginity is in the service of satisfying her own erotic longings.

As the Colloquy moves to a close, Maria forces Pamphilus to address certain genuine and enduring worries about married life: loss of liberty, economic hardships, the cares of childrearing, the risks of losing a child or of raising bad children. In all his answers, which we will not here rehearse, Pamphilus speaks the speech of strong, confident, and responsible manhood, willing and able to undertake all the risks of family life in the service of virtue and holiness. He concludes:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PAMPH. . . . We'll try, therefore, to be good ourselves. Next, we'll see that our children are imbued from birth with sacred teachings and beliefs. What the jar is filled with when new matters most. In addition, we'll see that at home we provide an example of life for them to imitate.

MARIA. What you describe is difficult.

PAMPH. No wonder, because it's good. (And you're difficult too, for the same reason!) But we'll labor so much the harder to this end.

MARIA. You'll have tractable material to work with. See that you form and fashion me.

Maria, in so many words, appears to have accepted his suit. But she keeps her composure. Pamphilus begs for her pledge; she refers him instead to seek the consent of their parents.

PAMPH. But meanwhile say just three words.*

MARIA. Nothing easier, but once words have flown out they don't fly back. I'll give better advice for us both: confer with your parents and mine, to get the consent of both sides.

PAMPH. You bid me ask for your hand in marriage, but in three words you can make success certain.

MARIA. I don't know whether I could. I'm not a free agent. In former times marriages were arranged only by the authority of elders. But however that may be, I think our marriage will have more chance of success if it's arranged by our parents' authority. And it's your part to make the proposal; that isn't appropriate to our sex. We girls like to be swept off our feet, even if sometimes we're deeply in love.

PAMPH. I won't be hesitant about making the proposal. Only don't let your decision alone defeat me.

MARIA. It won't. Cheer up, Pamphilus dear!

PAMPH. You're more straitlaced towards me in this business than I should like.

MARIA. But first ponder your own private decision. Judge by your reason, not your feeling. What emotion decides is temporary; rational choice generally pleases forever.

PAMPH. Indeed you philosophize very well, so I'm resolved to take your advice.

Even though he has spoken well to her in private, Pamphilus must back up his promising speech with courageous deed. He must acknowledge the claims of parents and tradition and demonstrate before sober judges that he is serious about marriage and its public status. He must swallow his pride, going as a petitioner to her parents, while displaying by this very act his manly ability to protect and provide for their daughter. Understandably, he seeks encouragement for his task; she urges him (and no doubt also herself) to be rational. Pamphilus presses Maria for a goodnight kiss as a token. Maria repairs again to the subject of chastity:

MARIA. . . . Farewell, Pamphilus darling.

PAMPH. That's up to you.

MARIA. I bid you good night. Why do you sigh?

PAMPH. "Good night," you say? If only you'd grant what you bid!

MARIA. Don't be in too great a hurry. You're counting chickens before they're hatched.

PAMPH. Shan't I have anything from you to take with me?

MARIA. This sachet, to gladden your heart.

PAMPH. Add a kiss at least.

MARIA. I want to deliver to you a virginity whole and unblemished.

PAMPH. Does a kiss rob you of your virginity?

MARIA. Then do you want me to bestow my kisses on others too?

PAMPH. Of course not. I want your kisses kept for me.

MARIA. I'll keep them for you. Though there's another reason why I wouldn't dare give away kisses just now.

PAMPH. What's that?

MARIA. You say your soul has passed almost entirely into my body and that there's only the slightest particle left in yours. Consequently, I'm afraid this particle in you would skip over to me in a kiss and you'd then become quite lifeless. So shake hands, a symbol of our mutual love; and farewell. Persevere in your efforts. Meanwhile I'll pray Christ to bless and prosper us both in what we do.

This final exchange reveals Maria's understanding of her own womanhood: "I want to deliver *to you* a

* "I am yours." In canon law, the exchange of such a pledge, in the present tense, was regarded as binding and accepted as a valid marriage, whether spoken publicly or privately.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

virginity *whole* and *unblemished*." Maria deliberately holds back, it seems, precisely because she knows what she most desires and what it really means to give herself to her beloved, body and soul. For her, virginity is not an empty heroic or Mars-like pose; neither is it an image of divine purity. It is important because it both represents and makes possible the serious, wholehearted, exclusive, unconditional, unsullied, lifelong attachment she most desires; we may even say, because it enables her to achieve her highest aspiration.

The Colloquy ends with Maria encouraging Pamphilus to persevere while she herself will seek divine blessing for their endeavors.

Let us quickly recapitulate ten important elements of the courtship exchange: 1) he must demonstrate concern for her esteem; he must make himself admirable, not merely attractive; 2) he must woo concretely, "embodiedly," and personally; love cannot remain a lofty, spiritual quest, indifferent to ordinary life; 3) he must see that he woos freely, not only from desire but also by choice, thus displaying in advance the free will by which he will later voluntarily bind himself in marriage; 4) he acknowledges the rule of what is lawful and right, reasonable and honorable; 5) he expresses the wish for exclusiveness, permanence, fidelity—for marriage, not an affair; 6) both he and (especially) she need to be deliberate: to evaluate character, to look for what could support and enhance their desire for lasting union; 7) both he and she must be mindful of the transience of bodily beauty; 8) both, but especially he, need to show concern for children and evince devotion to their well-being; 9) both need to be aware of the costs and risks of married life—in terms of decreased liberty, diminished wealth, and the pains of loss, grief, and disappointment—and show themselves ready to bear them; and, finally, 10) he must stand up before, and stand up to, the older generation, seeking parental consent, establishing links to the larger familial world and to the past, acknowledging that marriage is not just a private matter between the lovers. The manners and mores of courtship teach the lovers that eros, for all its glory, is not the highest authority.

Stepping back from the Colloquy, let us review courtship looking for general themes and possible generalizations. Unlike earlier mores that regulated relations between the sexes by paternal authority, religious edict, and arranged marriage, courtship takes erotic love of man for woman as its starting point, but seeks to discipline and direct it toward monogamous marriage. Erasmus' effort was in fact one of the earliest attempts to establish such marital mores, opposing not only arranged marriage but also the two nonmarital ideals, the romantic ideal of love poetry, the celibate ideal of the Church. Part of the discipline of erotic love comes from explicit and self-conscious confrontation with certain deep truths that, as we have seen, are embedded in the mores of courtship, truths regarding the promises and perils of sexual desire and erotic love, regarding human neediness and human freedom, regarding finitude and the longing for eternity, regarding marriage as a vehicle to life's higher possibilities. Courtship enables both man and woman to make clear the meaning of their own sexual nature, while elevating that nature by clothing it in the ceremonial and customary world of ritual and sanctification.

By holding back the satisfaction of sexual desire, courtship uses the energy of romantic attraction to foster salutary illusions that encourage admiration and devotion; functioning as ideals, they in turn inspire conduct worthy of admiration and devotion. At the same time, courtship provides opportunities for mutual learning about one another's character, manners, and tastes. It enables man and woman to discover whether they can be friends, not merely lovers, and whether they have enough in common and enough mutual regard to sustain a union even when the erotic ardor of youth subsides. By locating wooer and wooed in their familial settings, courtship teaches the couple the intergenerational meaning of erotic activity and prepares their parents to accept their own new station, no longer in the vanguard of life. The process of courting provides the opportunity to enact the kind of attentiveness, dependability, care, exclusiveness, and fidelity that the couple will subsequently promise each other when they finally wed.

For all these reasons, one does not exaggerate much in saying that going through the forms of courtship provides early practice in being married—a very different kind of practice, for a very different view of marriage, than the practice now thought to be provided by premarital cohabitation. Therefore, when they work well, the mores of courtship provide ample opportunity to discover how good a match and a marriage this is likely to be. In addition, as the natural elements of love between man and woman become a path to marriage, these elements are shaped by courtship into marriage's more than natural foundation. Courtship, a wisely instituted practice, is meant to substitute for any lack of personal wisdom.

But this summary ignores the important sexual asymmetry of courtship, well-represented in this colloquy. The roles are sexually distinct: the man

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

woos, the woman is wooed, and each quite self-consciously takes up the appropriate part. Initiative apparently belongs to the man, and, at least superficially, he takes the more active role. Pamphilus is in love, not just in lust, and while this makes him vulnerable to poetical exaggeration and prone to fantastical excess, his love indicates his capacity to look beyond himself, to be moved by more than selfish calculation, to risk ridicule, rejection, and failure. A lover—unlike a "significant other"—is fit for the adventure of marriage; he is not a fellow who plays it safe. In contrast to the calculating contractual partner, having given himself to the tempests of eros, he is much more likely to be able to promise "in sickness and in health," "for better and for worse." In the lover, sexual desire is sublimated and attached to an idealized beloved; his desire is inflamed by, and his eros is focused upon, a particular woman, whom he wants exclusively to possess and enjoy. Because she resists, his eros is enhanced by being linked to his pride, by his desire for victory, especially for a victory gained not through force but through her willing submission granted by his winning her esteem. As Allan Bloom remarks in *Love and Friendship* (in commenting on Rousseau's treatment of the same subject in *Émile*):

> Even the most independent-minded erotic man becomes dependent on the judgment of a woman, and a serious woman, one who is looking not only for an attractive man but for one who will love her and protect her, may be the best possible judge of a man's virtues and thus be regarded even by the most serious man as the supreme tribunal of his worth.

The correlative of manly ardor is womanly modesty, her reticence, her sexual self-restraint. This is the sine qua non of courtship and, we submit, the key to sound manners and mores regarding manhood and womanhood. It is this that makes manly wooing necessary, it is this that makes woman appear more desirable and worth winning, it is this that thereby spurs his ardor and inspires his winning speech and conduct. It is feminine modesty that turns men into lovers—not mere sex partners—and that gives the physically weaker sex the more commanding power of judgment and selection. To the extent that she can keep him somewhat unsure of, and hence more eager for, her return of his affection, she helps form on his side the exclusive attachment that she seeks and that is implied in her modestly "saving herself for marriage." No man would give his heart permanently to a woman of easy virtue or to one whose submissiveness he can take for granted.

Modesty not only spurs a man to love; equally important, it defends a woman against the hazards of her own considerable erotic desires. She has more at stake in sex than does the man. Even in our age of female contraception and easy abortion, pregnancy remains a concern mainly for women—indeed, arguably, more so than ever albeit for different reasons: the law now lodges responsibility and choice regarding pregnancy and childbirth entirely with her; in consequence, men are no longer under social pressure to marry a woman should she become pregnant with or give birth to his child. But, contrary to popular prejudice, female chastity in the past was not mainly contraceptive in intent, rooted only in fear of unwanted pregnancy. On the contrary, it was intended to serve the woman's positive procreative interest in the well-being of her (as yet unborn) children by securing for them in advance a devoted and dependable father, who would protect and provide for them. The "reproductive strategy" (to use the term of sociobiologists) is to attach the man exclusively and permanently to the woman through erotic love and to make him thereby also love and care for her—their—children. Women who think of themselves as potential wives and mothers, *and who act accordingly*, are much more likely to get men to think and act as prospective husbands and fathers. Sexual self-restraint enables a woman to find, win, and hold a man who is not only attractive but who is serious about life, serious enough to bind himself freely to the risk-filled adventure of marriage—and, implicitly, fatherhood—as the price for satisfying his erotic desires for her. In addition, her chastity before marriage gives the man confidence that she too is serious about sexual loyalty and fidelity, and, therefore, that the children she will bear for him to rear will be only his own.

But sexual modesty and chastity awaiting marriage are not just strategically sound and psychologically important. They are also an emblem of the unique friendship that is the union of husband and wife, in which the giving of the heart is enacted in the giving of the body, and in which the procreative fruit of their one-flesh bodily union celebrates their loving embrace not only of one another but also of their mortal condition and their capacity self-consciously to transcend it. There is no substitute for the contribution that the shared work of raising children makes to the singular friendship and love of husband and wife. Precisely because of its central procreative mission, and, even more, because children are yours for a lifetime, this is a friendship that cannot be had with any other person. Uniquely, it is a friendship that does not fly from but rather embraces wholeheartedly the finitude of its mem-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bers, affirming without resentment the truth of our human condition. Not by mistake did God create a woman—rather than a dialectic partner—to cure Adam's aloneness; not by accident does the same biblical Hebrew verb mean both to know sexually and to know the truth—including the generative truth about the meaning of being man and woman.

Courtship is centrally a matter for the courting couple, for the young man and his maid. But, as the Colloquy makes clear, it takes place in cultural and social settings that—when they are sound—give it shape, support its goals, and even provide larger horizons for the fulfillment of the couple's erotic longings. Larger family ties provide enriching links with ancestors and social networks of belonging. The married pair defines itself as a node joining separate lineages and as a link between generations. The establishment of a home for the rearing of decent children also gives man and woman a growing stake in matters political and a deeper interest in and greater openness to matters religious. Others speak of the need to impose top-down religiously based duties on man and woman to make the marriage work. We would rather point out the bottom-up ways in which marriage and especially parenthood may lead people toward the divine. The miraculous gift of new life, the astonishing power of parental love for children, the humility one painfully learns in trying to rear them, and (especially) the desire to give them not just life but a good way of life open a husband and wife to our most serious concern for the true, the good, and the holy. Parental love for children leads once wayward sheep back into the fold of church and synagogue. It holds out the possibility for the sanctification of everyday life, even in modern times.

Two final comments. We are aware that many will find this talk about courtship and female chastity quaint at best. People will insist, perhaps rightly, that most women will never wish to return to the mores of an age that knew not female contraception, late marriage, and careers for women. Our critics would like to believe that female chastity, or at least marked sexual self-restraint, is not necessary for sensible manners and mores regarding sex, marriage, and family. We suggest that the burden of proof lies with them to show how the important functions that courtship and modesty once performed can be accomplished in their absence.

Classical courtship was, in fact, a manifestation of the true power of women as women, residing in their modesty. Men were the visible actors, but the serious woman was in command. This implies that the possibility of restoring sensible sexual mores, pointing toward marriage, lies mainly with women—to be sure, only if a majority of women reassert the powerful virtue of self-restraint. Their willingness to exercise their power of reform depends, of course, on whether they think that a fulfilling marriage and motherhood are of primary importance in their life. Everything depends on whether modern young women—including modern conservative women—will see things this way. FT

Sometimes in Autumn

An overcast day: gray clouds slide
across the sky like platters on a table.
The grasses lift up brown tassels
from an undercoat of yellow;
the grasses have stolen the sun's yellow.

The wind frisks cars as they speed across
the bridge. Caution Wind Currents the sign says.
In a fury the wind scribbles white caps
upon the muddy river, but no one knows what they say.

Fall is late this year; burning summer
fought dismissal. A single poplar shivers
in the wind: its leaves flicker back and forth
like small hands waving gold and green to winter.

Mary Freeman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rousseau & the Revolt Against Reason

Mary Ann Glendon

In 1749 the Academy of Dijon offered a prize for the best essay on the question, "Has the restoration of the sciences and the arts contributed to the improvement of mores?" Most of the contestants must have vied in counting the ways "enlightenment" had raised the level of culture. By the middle of the eighteenth century, advances in science and technology had fueled faith in progress. It was widely believed that the human race was emerging from a long night of ignorance and superstition into an era when Reason at last would conquer age-old social and political problems. It was something of a sensation, therefore, when the palm went to a self-taught thirty-eight-year-old who answered the question with a resounding "No."

In the essay now known as his *First Discourse*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that manners and morals had been corrupted as the arts and sciences had advanced. The arts had encouraged sensuality and license, while science had set up strange gods against true religion. Reason had been elevated over feeling, learning over plain goodness and honesty. City people looked down on country folk, and the rich more than ever lorded it over the poor. Political writers spoke less of virtue than of commerce. Society was overrun with scribblers who "smile contemptuously at such old names as patriotism and religion, and consecrate their talents and philosophy to the destruction and defamation of all that men hold sacred." Echoing pietistic warnings about vain learning, Rousseau asked: What is learning without virtue? What progress can there be without progress in goodness?

The *First Discourse* was followed by a cascade of writings in which Rousseau challenged the scientific rationalism of Voltaire and other well-known intellectuals who immodestly called themselves *les Lumières*, the enlightened ones. In the space of twelve years, the eccentric outsider produced a stream of works that made him the preeminent critic of modernity. Yet he was no traditionalist. Through his elevation of feeling over reason, he became the leading prophet of the ultramodern era that would succeed the so-called age of reason.

Rousseau was born in Calvinist Geneva in 1712, the son of a watchmaker and a mother who died from complications of childbirth. When the boy was ten, his father placed him in the care of an uncle who in turn sent him to live with a country pastor. These men provided him with a haphazard education, but the precocious youth never received any formal schooling. At fifteen, after an unhappy apprenticeship to an engraver, he struck out on his own for the nearby Duchy of Savoy. There, a parish priest commended the wandering lad to the hospitality of a woman of good works in Annecy.

Warmhearted Madame de Warens, the estranged wife of a landowner, was not your usual church lady. Though a convert to Catholicism and pious in her way, she did not believe in original sin, or Hell, or that it could be sinful to follow one's natural impulses. She took a fancy to the clever, awkward boy, and he developed an enduring attachment to her. Rousseau spent several formative years as a sort of cavalier-servant, and occasional sexual partner, to this woman, whom he called *Maman*. Under her protection, he read voraciously, gained a sense of his extraordinary mental powers, and learned enough about music to support himself as a copyist and teacher.

In 1744, after holding various menial positions—footman, tutor, secretary—in well-to-do households here and there, Rousseau settled in Paris, determined to be independent. There he became friend-

MARY ANN GLENDON *is the Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly with Diderot, and began his lifelong liaison with Thérèse Le Vasseur, a laundry maid in his residential hotel. According to the well-known story in Rousseau's *Confessions*, each of the five children born of this union was abandoned to a foundling home shortly after birth. The writer whose works had extolled the child-centered family explained to posterity that he had insisted on this "solution," over Thérèse's tearful protests, because he was too poor to provide for children, and that, besides, they would have interfered with his study and work.

(Rousseau's biographers, though skeptical of much of his autobiographical material, have always taken that tale at face value. There is reason to suppose, however, that the long-suffering Thérèse may not have complied with her consort's wishes. She and her ever-present mother treated their brilliant patron, in many respects, like a child or ward. They did not hesitate, for instance, to make financial arrangements with Rousseau's friends behind his back. It would have been quite in character for them, faced with his refusal to accept parental responsibility, to have placed the babies with members of their large, extended Catholic family.)

Rousseau's circumstances improved greatly after he won the Dijon prize. His cheeky, contrarian *First Discourse* brought him not only literary fame, but an entrée into polite society where, however, he would never be at ease. That essay was followed by his discourses on *Inequality* (the *Second Discourse*) and *Political Economy*, both destined to be landmarks in political philosophy. *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, which appeared in 1761, became the best-selling novel of the eighteenth century. *The Social Contract*, with ideas and phrases that would capture the imaginations of revolutionaries, and *Émile*, his enormously influential work on education, were both published in 1762.

That extraordinary burst of creativity was followed by a long period of physical and mental decline, the former mostly due to an agonizing disorder of the urinary tract, and the latter aggravated by persecution for the blasphemies that Catholics and Calvinists alike discerned in his work. Despite the sufferings, real and imagined, of his later years, Rousseau managed to produce the *Confessions*, *Dialogues*, and *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, all published posthumously.

After his death in 1778, Rousseau's popularity soared to new heights. *Julie* and *Émile* continued to attract a wide readership, especially among women, while his political writings made him a cult hero to the leaders of the French Revolution. The century was one in which rulers and politicians were particularly open to the ideas of philosophers. Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine the Great, and Joseph II of Austria considered themselves enlightened monarchs and took pride in being advised by the likes of Voltaire. The American Founders were much influenced by the thinking of Locke and Montesquieu. When the French Revolution entered its radical phase, it was the ideas and catchphrases of Rousseau, more than any other thinker, that dominated the thinking and speaking of the insurgents.

Even today, Rousseau remains the preeminent expounder of challenging ideas about human beings, nature, politics, and history that must be reckoned with one way or another. Whether one finds him disturbing or stimulating, it is nearly impossible to remain unaffected by him. Like Plato and Nietzsche, he saw deeply into the most important questions and wrote about them so beautifully that, love him or hate him, we all stand in his shadow. As Allan Bloom once wrote, "His influence was overwhelming, and so well was it digested into the bloodstream of the West that it worked on everyone almost imperceptibly."

Rousseau's influence on political thought extended far beyond France and its Revolution. His early modern predecessors, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and Spinoza, had broken with the virtue-based political theories of the ancients and developed theories of government based on human nature as they thought it really was, rather than as it ought to be. Rousseau attacked this "new science of politics" at its foundations. He began his *Discourse on Inequality* by scoffing at previous attempts to account for the origins of government by describing what human beings must have been like in the "state of nature." The mythic tales told by Hobbes and Locke had recounted the progress of mankind from "a horrible state of war" (Hobbes) or from a "very precarious, very unsafe" existence (Locke) into a more secure way of life in organized society. According to Rousseau, such accounts had it backwards. Prior writers had failed to understand the natural condition of man, he claimed, because they "carried over to the state of nature ideas they had acquired in society; they spoke about savage man but they described civilized man." The complex fears and desires they attributed to our early ancestors could only have been produced by society.

Rousseau then presented his own version of prehistory as universal truth: "O man, of whatever country you are, and whatever your opinions may be, listen: behold your history as I have thought to read it, not in books written by your fellow creatures, who are liars, but in nature, which never lies." The earliest human, as Rousseau imagined him, was a simple, animal-like creature, "wholly wrapped up in the feeling of [his own] present existence." He was not inherently dangerous to his fellows as Hobbes had it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But neither was he fallen as the biblical tradition teaches. Rather, he must have led a "solitary," "indolent" life, satisfying his basic physical needs, mating casually without forming ties. He possessed a "natural feeling" of compassion for the suffering of other sentient beings that made him unwilling to harm others, unless (a big unless) his own self-preservation was at stake. He was not naturally endowed with reason, but existed in an unreflective state of pure being. The transition from this primitive state into civil society represented a "loss of real felicity," in Rousseau's view, rather than an unambiguous step forward.

Rousseau next took aim at the social contract theories of his predecessors. As he saw it, what drew human beings out of their primeval state was not rational calculation leading to agreement for the sake of self-preservation (as Hobbes and Locke thought), but rather a quality he called "perfectibility." Previous thinkers, he claimed, did not pay sufficient attention to the distinctively human capacity to change and develop, to transform oneself and to be transformed. In other words, they failed to consider the implications of the fact that human nature itself has a *history*. Or that human beings, through their capacity to form ideas, can to some extent shape that history. These were the insights of the *Discourse on Inequality* that won the admiration of such a dissimilar personality as Immanuel Kant and stirred the historical imaginations of Hegel and Marx.

With the development of human faculties, Rousseau continued, came language, family life, and eventually an era when families lived in simple tribal groups. That centuries-long stage of communal living, succeeding the state of nature and preceding organized society, he wrote, "must have been the happiest and most stable of epochs," which only a "fatal accident" could have brought to an end. That accident was precipitated by the ever-restless human mind that invented agriculture and metallurgy, which led in turn to the state of affairs where human beings lost their self-sufficiency and came to depend on one another for their survival. ("It is iron and wheat which have civilized men and ruined the human race.")

In contrast to Locke, who taught that property was an especially important, pre-political right, Rousseau wrote:

> The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying *This is mine*, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, "Beware of listening to this imposter, you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody."

Contrary to Hobbes and Locke, Rousseau contended that it was civil society, not nature, that gave rise to a state of affairs that was always in danger of degenerating into war. Civil society begat governments and laws, inequality, resentment, and other woes. Governments and laws "bound new fetters on the poor, and gave new powers to the rich; which irretrievably destroyed natural liberty, eternally fixed the law of property and inequality, converted clever usurpation into unalterable right, and, for the advantage of a few ambitious individuals, subjected all mankind to perpetual labor, slavery, and wretchedness." It would be absurd to suppose, he went on, that mankind had somehow consented to this state of affairs where "the privileged few . . . gorge themselves with superfluities, while the starving multitude are in want of the bare necessities of life."

Though Rousseau's evocative imaginary depictions of primitive societies were to swell the tide of nineteenth-century romantic "nostalgia" for the simple life, he himself insisted that there was no escape from history. There was no going back, he explained, because human nature itself had changed: "The savage and the civilized man differ so much . . . that what constitutes the supreme happiness of one would reduce the other to despair." Natural man had been sufficient unto himself; man in civil society had become dependent on his fellows in countless ways, even to the point of living "in the opinions of others." Reprising the theme of his Dijon essay, Rousseau concluded that modern man, though surrounded by philosophy, civilization, and codes of morality, had little to show for himself but "honor without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without happiness."

The radical character of Rousseau's political thought is nowhere more apparent than in his treatments of reason and human nature. Together with early modern and Enlightenment thinkers, he rejected older ideas of a natural law discoverable through right reason. But by insisting that human beings are not naturally endowed with reason, he struck at the very core of the Enlightenment project, subordinating reason to feeling in a move that would characterize the politics of a later age. Like others within the modern horizon, he rejected the older view that human beings are naturally social or political. But by exalting individual solitude and self-sufficiency, he set himself apart from his fellow moderns, anticipating the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hyper-individualism of a much later age—our own.

Not without justification, then, did Bloom call the *Discourse on Inequality* "the most radical work ever written, one that transformed the way people thought about the world." This one essay contained the germs of most of the themes Rousseau would develop in later works, and that would be further elaborated by others who came under his spell. Rousseau's lyrical descriptions of early man and simple societies fueled the nineteenth-century popular romantic revolt against classicism in art and literature. His criticism of property, together with his dark view of the downside of mutual dependence, made a deep impression on the young Karl Marx.

The thesis of the *Second Discourse*, that the most serious forms of injustice had their origins in civil society rather than in nature, foreshadowed Rousseau's famous charge at the beginning of *The Social Contract* that virtually all existing governments were illegitimate: "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains." Having raised the explosive issue of legitimacy, and sensing that Europe's old regimes were about to crumble, Rousseau turned to his most ambitious project to date: the question of how better governments might be established. "I want to seek," he wrote, "if, in the civil order, there can be some legitimate and solid rule of administration, taking men as they are and the laws as they can be."

Like many critical theorists before and since, Rousseau was less successful at developing a positive political vision of his own than he had been at spotting flaws in the theories of others. In *The Social Contract*, he framed the problem of good government as that of finding a form of political association which would protect everyone's person and property, but within which each person would remain "as free as before." The solution he devised was an agreement by which everyone would give himself and all his goods to the community, forming a state whose legislation would be produced by the will of each person thinking in terms of all (the "general will"). The state's legitimacy would thus be derived from the people, who, in obeying the law, would be obeying themselves.

That solution to the problem of legitimate government would obviously require a special sort of citizen, a "new man" who could and would choose the general will over his own interests or the narrow interests of his group. The concept of the general will thus links *The Social Contract* to Rousseau's writings on nurture, education, and morals, particularly *Émile*, which contains his program for forming the sentiments of the young so that they will retain their natural goodness while living in civil society.

The legitimate state, as Rousseau imagined it, would need not only virtuous citizens, but an extraordinary "Legislator" who could persuade people to accept the rules necessary for such a society. Law in the properly constituted state would be, among other things, an instrument of transformation: "He who dares to undertake the making of a people's laws ought to feel himself capable of changing human nature." Rousseau had learned from the classical philosophers, however, that good laws can take root only amidst good customs. It was thus implicit in *The Social Contract* that many existing societies were already beyond help. "What people," Rousseau asked, "is a fit subject for legislation?" His answer was not encouraging to revolutionaries bent on overthrowing unjust regimes: "One which, already bound by some unity of origin, interest, or convention, has never yet felt the real yoke of law; . . . one in which every member may be known by every other, and there is no need to lay on any man burdens too heavy for a man to bear; . . . one which is neither rich nor poor, but self sufficient. . . . All these conditions are indeed rarely found united, and therefore few states have good constitutions."

Once a legitimate state is established, it needs to be maintained and defended. Thus, according to Rousseau, there should be no "particular associations" competing for the loyalty of citizens; religion should not be left independent of political control; and those who refuse to conform to the general will would have to be "forced to be free."

The contrast between Rousseau's program and the practical ideas that guided the American Founders could hardly be more striking. The legacy of the most influential political *thinker* of the eighteenth century is thus at odds with the era's greatest political *achievement*—the design for government framed by men who believed that good governments could be based on reflection and choice. The pragmatic authors of *The Federalist* had their own, clear-eyed, understanding of human nature with its potency and its limitations. They knew that human beings are creatures of reason and feeling—capable of good and evil, trust and betrayal, creativity and destruction, selfishness and cooperation. In Madison's famous formulation: "As there is a certain degree of depravity in human nature which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence."

As it turned out, Rousseau and his most discerning readers, especially Tocqueville, served the world's democratic experiments well as sources of constructive criticism. They were instrumental in keeping alive the classical insight that a healthy polity cannot

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be sustained without virtuous citizens and good customs. They have been among the main contributors to the classical critique of liberalism that has sustained, enriched, and corrected the excesses of democratic states. At the same time, however, liberal democracy has been menaced by Rousseau's most illegitimate offspring—not the Le Vasseurs who, God willing, are still thriving somewhere, but the practitioners of the politics of feeling who bridle at authority themselves but advocate authoritarian measures to force others to be free.

Generations of scholars have attempted to resolve the seeming contradictions in Rousseau's political writings, notably between his passionate attachment to natural freedom and his complacency about the state that forces nonconformists to be free. Biographers have pointed out that Rousseau himself was against revolution; that he thought the ideas in *The Social Contract* could work only in a small homogeneous polity like Geneva; and that he was generally pessimistic about the possibility of changing bad institutions.

But in the worlds of politics and culture, what Rousseau actually said or meant was of less consequence than the emotional responses his writings stirred. Rousseau's critique of existing governments was heady stuff. The difficulty and subtlety of his political thought were masked by his fluid, seductive literary style. His writings thus became a reservoir of ideas and slogans from which individualists and communitarians, revolutionaries and conservatives, moralists and bohemians, constitutionalists and Marxists drew freely and selectively. Vulgarization of his thought sheared off his deep historical pessimism, with the result that his influence at the popular level was overwhelmingly to the left where, ironically, it fed the nineteenth-century cult of progress.

Though Rousseau can fairly be regarded as the leading secular thinker of the Counter-Enlightenment, his "defense" of religion shows how firmly he stood within the modern horizon of his antagonists, and how he extended that horizon. Voltaire and others, much impressed by the natural science of their day, mounted an offensive against what they called "clericalism" but by which they meant Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular. They portrayed organized religion as an impediment to progress and a bastion of bigoted ignorance. Rousseau gained more credit than he deserved for reproving their contempt of religion in his *First Discourse,* for he was no friendlier to traditional religion than they. His childhood Calvinism and his brief, later passage through Catholicism left him with a vocabulary and a critical stance, but little more. Where Christianity was concerned, he seems to have unquestioningly accepted the reigning opinion among the secular learned men of his time.

He made his own views about organized religion clear in *Émile* and *The Social Contract*—so clear in fact that he was forced to flee from both Swiss and French authorities. The Savoyard vicar in *Émile* sounded much like Rousseau himself. He argued that the presence of religion in society should be welcomed, but not the religion of the day. Rejecting *both* reason and revelation, he proclaimed that "The essential worship is that of the heart. God does not reject its homage, if it is sincere, in whatever form it is offered to him." The religion that Rousseau "defended" was a radically subjective one, based on inner sentiment—a belief system rooted in being true to one's own feelings. It was the religion of Madame de Warens—the same religion that a U.S. Supreme Court plurality would one day attempt to establish when it announced a "right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life" (*Casey v. Planned Parenthood,* 1992).

That private, inner religion was well-suited for the ideal polity outlined in *The Social Contract.* Once a truly legitimate state has been constructed, Rousseau argued, religion would be helpful in shoring it up—ideally, a patriotic "civil religion." Sharing Hobbes' fear of competitors for loyalty with the state, Rousseau held that a well-constituted state could be tolerant of other sorts of religious activity so long as they remained inward and private. Unlike Luther and other reformers, he was uninterested in correcting the defects of institutional religion. He came not to support their critique, but to push it to the limit.

Morality, in Rousseau's view, was rooted in neither reason nor revelation, but in the natural feeling of compassion. Indeed, he is in an important sense the father of the politics of compassion. As we now know, however, compassion is a shaky foundation on which to build a just society. Compassion, unlike charity, is not a virtue acquired by self-discipline and habitual practice. It is only a feeling, and a fleeting one at that. It yields not only to self-preservation, but to self-interest.

Rousseau's thought won admiration from a surprising assortment of readers. *Julie* marked the rise of the romantic literary genre that celebrates the primacy of feeling and the beauties of nature, while the *Confessions* did the same for the modern literature of self-revelation. Taken out of context, his passages on the communal existence of peoples, his evocation of a lost happy childhood of the human race, and his stress on the importance of religion found wide and disparate audiences, as did his critiques of the commercial mentality, the institution of private

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

property, and the conquest of nature. The new human sciences of anthropology and psychology and the modern understanding of history are all in his debt.

Yet not all of his insights were original. He borrowed heavily, though haphazardly, from classical and biblical sources to criticize the reigning dogmas of his age. The extent of his debt was not always apparent, for he was adept at "translating" traditional wisdom into language that appealed to secular intellectuals. Though his skepticism about the benefits of progress in the arts and sciences was at odds with widely held views among educated men of his time, such attitudes would have been common among the women who were his closest friends, and in popular devotional literature.

Madame de Stael once remarked of Rousseau, "He had nothing new, but he set everything on fire." Though exaggerating his lack of originality, she did not overestimate the magic of his prose. Rousseau was a consummate stylist, the father of the sound-bite, a phrasemaker par excellence. Moreover, he gave many different kinds of readers the impression that he understood and empathized with their deepest concerns. Above all, he tapped into *ressentiment* as no writer had done before. All the humiliations he had suffered in his life, all the pettiness and vice he had observed in the households of the ruling classes, lent power to his prose. Many others before and since have written about the plight of the disadvantaged and the injuries of class, but Rousseau remains, as Judith Shklar neatly put it, the "Homer of the losers."

By Rousseau's own lights, however, his influence was different from, even opposite to, what he had hoped. His philosophical ideas, he frequently insisted, were only for the few, and the writings containing them could not be understood unless read in relation to one another—and more than once. The teaching of the *First Discourse*, for instance, is not that the sciences and the arts are unworthy pursuits, but that their spread to the public at large, their vulgarization, had had a corrupting effect—by destabilizing customary morality and fostering skepticism. The best education for ordinary folk, Rousseau held, was education aimed at the formation of healthy sentiments.

But no writer can control how and by whom his works are read. Discerning readers like Tocqueville and Kant were stimulated by Rousseau. To them, his writings were sources of enrichment and challenge, not least because, in his borderline mystical way, he carried forward to the new science of politics important insights from classical and biblical thought. Many activists who were "influenced" by Rousseau's political ideas, however, probably never read even one of his works in its entirety. More often than not, Rousseau's writings seem to have affected the emotions of his readers more than their intellects. Even Jacques Maritain, who detested Rousseau, conceded that, more than any other writer, Rousseau gave voice to the longings of his times:

> Such men are prophets of the spirit of the world, prophets of below, who concentrate in their heart the influences which work in the deeps of wounded humanity during a whole epoch. They then proclaim the age which is to follow them, and at the same time discharge on the future with prodigious strength those influences which have found their unity in them. They act on men by an awakening of emotional sympathies. . . . They spread around them the contagion of their self, the waves of their feelings and their instincts, they absorb people into their temperament.

What is one to make of a body of thought so ambiguous and so influential as that of Rousseau? Rousseau's native genius enabled him to acquire a good grasp of one of the two great premodern intellectual traditions. He learned enough from the ancient Greeks to mount a powerful critique of narrow scientific rationalism, but not enough to appreciate the more capacious form of reason that gave the classical and biblical traditions alike their dynamism. Like the Enlightenment thinkers he criticized, Rousseau rejected the moral and intellectual traditions that had nourished his own genius, throwing out the *ratio* of natural law along with modern scientific reason. He thus failed to see that what he called "perfectibility" was rooted in man's innate desire to know, the desire that gives rise to the never-ending, recurrent operations of questioning, experiencing, understanding, and choosing.

This prodigiously gifted, gravely flawed genius of the eighteenth century was at his best when he reminded his proud contemporaries of the limitations of science and politics. He sounded an early, much needed warning that material progress does not necessarily bring moral progress. He helped to keep alive the classical insight that good government requires moral foundations. He gave vivid expression to the plight of the poor and marginalized. But Rousseau's most problematic legacy, the one that bedevils us today, has been his elevation of sincerity over truth, and feeling over reason. Ironically, philosophical works he meant for the few fostered popular skepticism and relativism, while his writings addressed to the many promoted a revolt against reason even among philosophers. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Still Waiting for Benedict

Gilbert Meilaender

Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues. By Alasdair MacIntyre. *Open Court. 166 pp. $26.95.*

The MacIntyre Reader. Edited by Kelvin Knight. *University of Notre Dame Press. 300 pp. $40 cloth, $19.95 paper.*

It would be hard to think of any book of moral philosophy written in the last fifty years that has reoriented debate more or itself become the subject of greater debate than Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, published in 1981. There, having explained the moral fragmentation of our time as a story of the loss (beginning in the fifteenth century) of an Aristotelian morality and the failure of "the Enlightenment project" to provide a successful replacement for that loss, MacIntyre posed the choice for which *After Virtue* is well known: Nietzsche or Aristotle. These are "the two genuine theoretical alternatives" available to us. If we do not want, with Nietzsche, to consider all moral judgments, whatever their purported objectivity, as disguised expressions of subjective will, we have to ask ourselves, "Was it right in the first place to reject Aristotle? . . . Can Aristotle's ethics, or something very like it, after all be vindicated?"

The second half of *After Virtue* began this work of reconstruction and vindication. What we had lost was a teleological understanding of human life. The moral duties and virtues that traditional morality commended made sense only if they were understood as depicting the means by which we could get from our present self-interested and sinful state to a quite different state: human nature in its flourishing condition, as it could be if its *telos* were realized. But without any agreed-upon understanding of what it would mean to flourish as human beings, we were left with traditional precepts applied to a (self-interested and sinful) human nature for which they scarcely seemed fitting. Only if understood as the way *from* our present corrupted nature *to* our promised flourishing nature could these precepts make sense. Ripped from that setting, traditional precepts were bound to seem arbitrary and hard to defend—with the flavor of inexplicable taboos. Enlightenment thinkers tried to reclaim at least some of traditional morality by refounding it upon human will and choice. *After Virtue* recounts the failure of that project, its descent into morality as mere subjectivity within a morally fragmented culture—the situation that Nietzsche unmasked.

Thus the question, "Can Aristotle's ethics, or something very like it, after all be vindicated?" Aristotle's ethics had provided the needed teleology, grounded in biology. Understanding human beings in their animal nature as part of the natural world, he had provided a metaphysical conception of human nature, locating human life within a teleologically ordered world. The MacIntyre of *After Virtue* wanted the teleology (to make sense of morality) but not the metaphysical biology. He did not think that any unitary account (with a unitary *telos*) of human life could be grounded in nature. Instead, he turned for the necessary teleology from biology to sociology, from the natural world to the cultural world human beings construct. The second half of *After Virtue* developed a non-metaphysical teleological sociology in which the concept of a virtue was explicated in terms of "practices." In a variety of human "practices," in order to achieve goods that are internal to the practice itself (and not just external goods that one might acquire by means of the practice), human beings must develop the excellences of character that we call virtues. (Thus, for

Gilbert Meilaender *holds the Board of Directors Chair in Theological Ethics at Valparaiso University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

example, one may not be able to have the experience of playing well in an orchestra that itself plays well without the achievement of certain excellences of character.) These are not merely subjective choices that some people make; they are traits absolutely necessary for the achievement of excellent practice.

Thus was spawned an enormous body of literature about practices (which, I must say, we might all have done better to have missed) and an enormous body of literature about MacIntyre's work more generally. Following its twists and turns has become a major preoccupation for some, and—with the publication of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, with its further development of MacIntyre's view as a *Thomistic* Aristotelianism, and the continued development of this view in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*—study of his work has been a growth industry and a boon to graduate students in search of dissertation topics.

It is not an easy body of work, by any means. Quite welcome, therefore, is *The MacIntyre Reader*. The long and very helpful introduction by editor Kelvin Knight will profit almost anyone who wants to follow the trajectory of development that MacIntyre's work (beginning long before *After Virtue*) has taken. In addition to extracts from several of the books and a number of important articles in which MacIntyre has advanced and developed his thought, the volume also contains two interesting interviews with MacIntyre and a very extensive "Guide to Further Reading." Even so, I am not certain that anything in the *Reader* would have given us all the clues needed to predict the turn MacIntyre now takes in *Dependent Rational Animals*. If the choice is Nietzsche or Aristotle—and, indeed, that remains the choice even on the very last pages of the book—MacIntyre is moving ever closer to Aristotle, though a Thomistic Aristotle.

In *Dependent Rational Animals* he now turns away—after all that ink has been spilt—from an attempt to talk about morality solely in terms of social practices and back towards metaphysical biology. Not, of course, that he returns to the biology of Aristotle; the project must be updated. Nevertheless that *is* the project: "Although there is indeed good reason to repudiate important elements in Aristotle's biology, I now judge that I was in error in supposing an ethics independent of biology to be possible." Whether MacIntyre pulls it off, readers will have to judge. It is, however, a promising and needed change of course, for it offers hope of delivering us from the moral schizophrenia of our culture. On the one hand, we are told from many quarters that there really is no nature with which our morality must come to terms; all is social construction. On the other hand, we emphasize our evolutionary kinship with the "other" animals and worry lest we lose our sense of kinship with them. On the one hand, we distinguish human beings from persons on the basis of the presence or absence of certain characteristics, thinking only of the latter (smaller and less inclusive) group as those who might have moral claims upon us. On the other hand, we pass laws requiring ever greater accommodation to the needs of the disabled. MacIntyre is not captive to these disjunctions, and the effort to read *Dependent Rational Animals* will help us to avoid such captivity.

It will be effort, however. As an exercise in prose communication, the book is not likely to make its readers forget such stylistic masters as Hobbes or Hume—or, even, to use a contemporary writer on similar topics, Walzer. Here is a sample sentence, admittedly one of the worst, but not quite atypical enough: "But what makes it the case that her or his reason for doing x is that x will bring about y is that she or he judges that x will bring about y and that, were she or he to judge otherwise she or he would not do x, unless, that is, there is some other good z that she or he is also aiming to achieve, and she or he also judges that doing x will bring about z." More generally, each potential reader herself or himself, contemplating whether she or he wishes to spend her or his time reading *Dependent Rational Animals* or books still perhaps to follow it, would be given great encouragement were MacIntyre, independent thinker that he is, to rediscover the potential for generic uses of the personal pronoun. There is also in this book rather more about dolphins—both common and bottlenose—than some readers may wish to know. Clearly, some of this information is important to the case MacIntyre is building for thinking of human beings as animals; nevertheless the detail seems on occasion a bit lavish.

MacIntyre does, however, help his readers with summaries of the argument along the way—and they are genuinely helpful. The course of the entire argument is something like the following: Human beings must be understood, first, as animals, though, of course, a special sort of animal. MacIntyre develops this point by discussing in some detail those aspects of our nature that are shared with other intelligent (though non-language-using) species such as dolphins. He argues, in constant conversation with several streams (Anglo-Saxon and Continental) of philosophical literature, that it is appropriate to ascribe to animals such as dolphins intentions and reasons for action. They are not so far removed from us as we sometimes like to imagine. Hence, in the early years of life especially, as we develop our capacities as rational agents, the condi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion of human beings is not unlike that of some other animals. "Our identity was then and remains an animal identity."

MacIntyre emphasizes, in addition, an important feature of our animal nature that has not, in his view, received the philosophical attention it deserves: the disability and vulnerability that mark every period of human life, especially early childhood and old age. (He thinks, in fact, that philosophers have paid almost no heed to human disability—and that, when they have, it is almost always to picture the disabled as possible objects of benevolence from other moral agents who are themselves unimpaired. While there is a good bit to this, I am not entirely persuaded that disability and vulnerability have played so little role in the thinking of, say, Augustine, Hobbes, Epicurus, and Rousseau.) To take disability seriously as a natural fact of life means not to exempt any of us from it. MacIntyre wants us to remember that "there is a scale of disability on which we all find ourselves. Disability is a matter of more or less. . . . And at different periods of our lives we find ourselves, often unpredictably, at very different points on that scale."

In any case, this is where we begin life—as dependent, rational animals. To develop our capacity as moral agents means to achieve a certain measure of independence, though, as we will see, this should not come at the expense of acknowledging our constant and continued dependence. Just as we imply something about what it would mean for dolphins to flourish, what would be good for them, when we talk about the dangers and harms to which they are subject, so also for human beings. Along the path each of us must take toward becoming an independent reasoner many dangers are strewn. To become such independent reasoners we will need a variety of capacities: the ability to detach ourselves from the immediacy of our desires, and the ability to imagine alternative realistic futures, for example. And, MacIntyre suggests, capacities such as these cannot be achieved except by those who possess certain virtues which we cannot acquire without sustained help from those others, especially but not only our parents, upon whom we depend. The qualities needed to flourish as dependent rational animals—to grow from and within our vulnerable condition toward the capacity to reason independently—are familiar virtues: "the risk-taking and patience of courage, justice in assigning tasks and praise, the temperateness required for discipline, the cheerful wit of an amiable will."

There is yet more, however. We need such virtues not only that we ourselves may grow toward independence; we need them also because, without them, none of us could adequately care for and educate the next generation in order that those who follow us may also flourish in a characteristically human way. Each of us from the outset lives in debt—that is simply a fact embedded in the vulnerability and fragility of human life. We will need therefore not only the virtues that enable us to grow toward independence and help others to do so as well, but also the virtues of "acknowledged dependence." We must learn how to practice gratitude, courtesy, and forbearance. If ever MacIntyre's Aristotelianism might have drawn him in the direction of Aristotle's great-souled man, who is ashamed to receive benefits, this is no longer the case. With his Aristotle read through the transforming lens of Aquinas, MacIntyre sees in the great-souled man one who suffers from an illusion of self-sufficiency, forgetful of what he has received but eager to remember what he has given.

The picture of human life that emerges is, thus, one of reciprocal indebtedness. I flourish only insofar as others make my good their own, helping me especially through periods of weakness and disability so that I can acquire the virtues that constitute such flourishing. And to the degree that I acquire them, I become able and willing, in turn, to regard the good of yet others as my own.

> To participate in this network of relationships of giving and receiving as the virtues require, I have to understand that what I am called upon to give may be quite disproportionate to what I have received and that those to whom I am called upon to give may well be those from whom I shall receive nothing. And I also have to understand that the care I give to others has to be in an important way unconditional, since the measure of what is required of me is determined in key part, even if not only, by their needs.

This gives rise to MacIntyre's Aristotelian understanding of politics. In a world where all are reciprocally indebted to each other, we can say neither that the individual's good is subordinated to that of the community nor that the community exists simply to foster the good of individuals.

Not only to seek but even to be able to name our own good, we must make communal goods our own. Communities are formed by individuals, but the individual cannot formulate or seek his own good apart from the community. Contrary to the standard American understanding of the meaning of liberal democracy, "the common good cannot therefore be understood as a summing of individual goods, as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

constructed out of them." This does not mean, of course, that individuals are nothing more than members of the body politic. They share in many other, nonpolitical common goods—in the family, in the many groups and organizations to which they belong, and in a variety of practices to which they are committed. But political community exists to foster the kind of cooperative reasoning about common goals that enables them to avoid fragmentation and to find ways by which rationally to relate the several goods they pursue in life.

So understood, political community exists not to adjust competing interests or to provide goods and services. It exists to make possible the kind of community in which joint deliberation about life can take place within a framework of reciprocal indebtedness and just generosity. And while MacIntyre acknowledges that the modern nation-state does provide certain necessary and important public goods, he believes that it does little more than adjust competing interests and masks its manipulation of our lives with talk of a common good that must necessarily be a sham. "The modern state," as he says in one of the essays in the *Reader*, "is a large, complex, and often ramshackle set of interlocking institutions, combining none too coherently the ethos of a public utility company with inflated claims to embody ideals of liberty and justice." Political life within such a state is not organized as a practice, and it cannot overcome the fragmentation of our lives into various roles that lack overall unity. Communities smaller than the nation-state—and certainly much less than "global"—are the only possible public spaces in which a genuine common good can be debated and nourished.

With this as a summary of the main lines of the argument, we can contemplate the promise and the problems in some of the book's central themes. It is important to see that, at least in considerable measure, MacIntyre here moves beyond the emphasis on moral reasoning and adjudicating rival perspectives that has marked his work since *After Virtue*. This book is less metaethics than ethics; it seeks to argue for a normative view, not just discuss how one might so argue in our fragmented culture.

To get some sense of the kind of advance this involves we might remind ourselves of one of the most disappointing sentences in *After Virtue*. In that book, having depicted the failure of the Enlightenment project to found morality on a rational basis, having narrated the way in which that failure had resulted in a culture in which moral arguments were shrill and interminable, and having offered the concept of a practice (and language about what constitutes good practice) as the starting point for explaining how rational argument about morality might be possible, MacIntyre tried to recapture teleological language for moral reasoning—but without any real substantive content to this language: "The good life for man is the life spent in seeking the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is." Readers might have been pardoned for wondering whether the emotivist self with its criterionless choices had been fully exorcised.

Now, however, in *Dependent Rational Animals*, because he has grounded his concept of human flourishing in our animal nature, MacIntyre is far better able to give content to the good life. Born as dependent animals into a species characterized by rationality, none of us individually can become independent reasoners—can move from dependence to relative independence—without the exercise of certain virtues. We must become virtuous, and others around us must also have the virtues they need to help us. Still more, unless we are to deceive ourselves greatly, we must—however great our progress—also have virtues that enable us to acknowledge our continued dependence. We must see ourselves as always vulnerable and, even, more or less disabled. In short, MacIntyre has poured some content into the language of human flourishing precisely by taking seriously our animality, our continual dependence and vulnerability, and our capacity to become independent reasoners. *Dependent Rational Animals* revives a kind of natural law reasoning quite different from the more Kantian versions developed so powerfully in recent years by John Finnis and Germain Grisez (and, perhaps, by Pope John Paul II). It really is a Thomistic Aristotelianism that MacIntyre offers us.

This turn to the construction of a normative ethic grounded in nature does not mean, however, that MacIntyre has entirely left behind his ongoing concern for how we judge between rival moral claims, nor does it mean that that problem has been resolved. As I noted above, in *After Virtue* Nietzsche and Aristotle constitute "the two genuine theoretical alternatives" available to us. This is still true in the last chapter of *Dependent Rational Animals*, and it is still true in a sense that the choice between them cannot precisely be rationally adjudicated, though MacIntyre is now able to say a little more about why this is so.

On MacIntyre's view, if we possess both the virtues of independence and the virtues of acknowledged dependence, we will be committed to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

act in certain ways—even, he says, unconditionally committed so to act. Suppose—like the Good Samaritan—I see a stranger in dire need. If my character has been properly formed with the virtue of "just generosity," the stranger's need alone will constitute sufficient reason for me to help. No further justification need be given. Indeed, it would be bad even to try to offer further justification—as, for example, suggesting that meeting the stranger's need will, when seen in broader compass, actually help to realize my own good. To offer such an argument or to ask for one "is itself a sign of defective virtue." Those who know their reciprocal indebtedness and whose character has been formed in a community with a genuine common good will possess virtues that would make the offering of help unquestionably a duty.

Now, to be sure, MacIntyre also holds that only those whose character has been so formed—who, seeing need, would help the stranger without further reflection—will flourish as human beings. For, by acting in accord with virtue they achieve their own good as well. But it may not be obvious that to act virtuously is to flourish. Because it is not obvious, someone might say: "Give me a good reason why I should help this stranger in need. His need alone is not sufficient reason unless I can also see how such action will further my own good. Helping him just now looks to me more like self-sacrifice than self-fulfillment." Anyone who makes such an argument—who, in a sense, puts a gun to the head of morality and asks it to justify itself in terms of his own good—has stepped outside the world of reciprocal indebtedness. Enabled by such a world to become an independent reasoner, he has kicked away the ladder beneath him and declared his independence of all prior commitments. And many of MacIntyre's readers will surely recognize that he is here describing a central thread of modern moral philosophy.

"It follows," MacIntyre writes in one very long sentence,

> that someone who was able and willing at some point in her or his life to separate her or himself, in practice as well as in theory, wholly and not only in part, not in this or that stage or aspect of her or his life, but in all her or his activities and in all her or his sufferings, from those social relationships that are informed by the norms of giving and receiving, and from the virtues that sustain those relationships, including that of just generosity towards and gratitude to the able and the disabled alike, would by rejecting all the relevant moral commitments have also cut her or himself off from participation in any common work of rational enquiry and criticism.

Who could possibly do such a thing? Is this not a merely hypothetical possibility? "That this is indeed . . . [possible] would perhaps have been no more than an inference, were it not for Nietzsche's heroic work and life." Nietzsche, "in a heroic series of acts isolated himself by ridding himself, so far as is humanly possible, of the commitments required by the virtues of acknowledged dependence."

Once again, therefore, it is Aristotle (in the updated version MacIntyre has provided) or Nietzsche. And there is no rational way to adjudicate these rival claims. If persuaded by MacIntyre, we can learn from Nietzsche in order to clarify our own choices, but we cannot participate with him (or any who really want to follow him) in a sustained process of conversation, criticism, and inquiry. Nor can we reply to him on his own terms. We cannot argue with him about the good, for he will not acknowledge the animal dependence so central to our understanding of what is humanly good. Reasoning has its limits.

Recognition of these limits forces upon us a crucial political problem. Suppose that within one society, occupying a common space, we have some Aristotles and some Nietzsches. The Aristotles believe we can describe "the good life for man." The Nietzsches believe there is no such thing. It would seem that they cannot share a common life—pursuing a common good—in MacIntyre's sense. They might find a way to live together in relative peace, observing rules that treat their competing interests with reasonable fairness, but their shared life can hardly amount to more than that. They cannot see themselves as invested in public life in the same way they are invested in some other communities—such as family or faith—of which they are a part. Consequently their life will be divided and fragmented into separate public and private roles. Their political life as such will have no common goal, no destination. It will exist simply to bring about, as best it can, a coincidence of interests that makes ongoing societal life possible.

In describing such a society I have, of course, described something like the notion of liberal democracy which MacIntyre finds so inadequate. What he thinks we need politically is some form of local community, relatively small though much larger than a family, in which a common good is really pursued and in which the virtues of acknowledged dependence are, in fact, acknowledged. That there is something to what he says I cannot doubt. It is instructive, for example, to note how parents who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

home-school their children are led ineluctably to form cooperative organizations in which, to some extent, they reduplicate the institutions of a public school system. But MacIntyre must say more than he has thus far about where we might find, or how we might create, the community he describes—a family writ large and not a community of competing interests.

It is true enough that our lives are somewhat fragmented, that we may sometimes have difficulty fashioning a *unified* life out of those many roles. But this may simply be the human condition. If so, then, MacIntyre is seeking a politics—indeed, a polis—that can deliver us from ourselves, that can save us. We may well doubt that politics can provide such redemption, and we should, I think, continue to hope that citizens may invest themselves in and feel a sense of membership in political communities that do not suppose they can overcome the tension between *mine* and *thine*. MacIntyre is by no means the only twentieth-century philosopher for whom something like the polis seems to be the ideal. Yet, for all their philosophic brilliance, the ancient Greeks were largely failures at politics. They could not sustain a common life over time, and their political life was chaotic and, in many respects, unjust. If there is something better out there somewhere, we need to be able to examine it more directly—in order to decide whether it is really better or whether it will turn out that in fostering some human goods it makes others more difficult to achieve.

Readers of *After Virtue* may remember that Nietzsche and Aristotle were not the only names invoked to depict the choice before us. The last chapter of that book was titled: "After Virtue: Nietzsche *or* Aristotle, Trotsky *and* St. Benedict." If the political spinoff from a revival of Aristotelian ethics would be the construction of smaller, local forms of community in which a common good could truly be pursued, and if both the liberal and the Marxist traditions are (as MacIntyre argued in *After Virtue*) exhausted, where can we turn for wisdom about the construction of community? All too elliptically MacIntyre suggested: We might turn to the pessimism of Trotsky's last writings, a dark pessimism acknowledging that nothing redemptive was going to come out of the current political structures of late modernity. But we might also hope that, in the midst of the darkness, there were some at work constructing new forms of community in which the moral life could be sustained. Thus, the oft-cited concluding sentence of *After Virtue*: "We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict."

In the almost two decades since that sentence was written, MacIntyre has not, I suggested above, really made much progress in pointing us to actual communities of the sort he has in mind. Evidently we still await St. Benedict. But he has, in ways I also noted above, made considerable progress in developing a normative ethic. And one might wonder whether the structure of that ethic—developed after MacIntyre's return to the Church—does not show the influence of some Benedict. In certain ways I think it does. Some of the most powerful passages in *Dependent Rational Animals*—and, perhaps not coincidentally, some of the simplest, clearest prose—comes when MacIntyre explicates the dependence and vulnerability that characterize our animal condition. "Persons" simply are *dependent* rational animals—and sometimes very dependent indeed.

As I noted earlier, MacIntyre decisively rejects Aristotle's praise of the great-souled man who would be ashamed to acknowledge his dependence on others. And, indeed, if we think about it, where better than a Benedictine monastery to find a way of life that schools us in acknowledging our reciprocal indebtedness? We should, MacIntyre clearly thinks, strive for such acknowledgment in society more generally. Ours is a world in which certain claims about "personhood" have become quite common. Many now argue—or assert—that only those human beings who are self-aware, rational, and free to make choices are "persons" with full claims upon us for our care and concern. Without ever directly addressing such arguments, MacIntyre charts a different course.

Any human society is bound to include many who are dependent and, even, many "whose extreme disablement is such that they can never be more than passive members." They seem to have little "personhood" that demands our respect. Nevertheless, a community characterized by reciprocal indebtedness and just generosity—a community, that is, whose life is marked by the virtues of acknowledged dependence that are grounded in our nature—will be one in which such members are treated with "a regard that is not conditional upon the contingencies of injury, disease, and other afflictions." Our first thought about such members of the community should be, "I might have been that individual." Indeed, still more, these people can become our teachers. "What they give us is the possibility of learning something essential, what it is for someone else to be wholly entrusted to our care, so that we are answerable for their well-being."

> What matters is not only that in this kind of community children and the disabled are objects of care and attention. It matters also and correspondingly that those who are no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> longer children recognize in children what they once were, that those who are not yet disabled by age recognize in the old what they are moving towards becoming, and that those who are not ill or injured recognize in the ill and injured what they often have been and will be and always may be. . . . Yet that awareness cannot itself be achieved without those same virtues [of independence and of acknowledged dependence].

For all the power of such passages—and nothing I am about to say can detract from their power—we might ask whether an Aristotelian starting point is the best way to get there. I noted above MacIntyre's insistence that we not pit individual good against communal good. Where there is a true common good we cannot readily distinguish *mine* from *thine*. The good of others who share with me in that common life becomes my own good. This is not altruism on my part—as if I were willing to sacrifice my good for the sake of others. It takes us beyond that tension between egoism and altruism. Making the good of others my own simply *is* my flourishing. In fact, "self-sacrifice . . . is as much of [a] vice, as much of a sign of inadequate moral development, as selfishness." When a Christian writer makes such a statement, I think we may safely say that something has gone awry.

To be sure, we can understand what MacIntyre has in mind if we think about the way in which a family flourishes. Family members pursue their own projects and goals, of course, but different members bear different burdens and receive different benefits—sometimes quite unequally—in order that the family as a body may function well. When some members of a family make more sacrifices than others it would not be quite right to say that in doing so they set aside their own good as members of the family; for, apart from such sacrifices, no good of the family exists in which they can share and participate. That is what a real common life and common good looks and feels like. It involves a personal bond in which each member is treated equally but not at all identically. Not abstract justice or fairness but love is the cardinal virtue of a family. Its structure is, to use C. S. Lewis' image, less like stones laid in a row and more like stones that form an arch.

MacIntyre wants the same to be true of politics—as if the personal really could be political. But a political community is not a family—or a church—and problems lie near at hand when we forget this. If, as MacIntyre puts it in Aristotelian terms, the political community is the largest and most self-sufficient of the communities within which we live, then it is the community which must provide for us a unified life—overcoming the tensions of different roles and competing interests in such a way that we *belong* to the whole extent of our being, in such a way that belonging cannot require any sacrifice of our own good because that good is encompassed entirely by life within the community. I do not think we should so construe the point and purpose of politics.

To take as our goal the integrated fulfillment over time of all our projects and desires would, in Thomas Nagel's words, "exclude from life the possibility of commitments to others which, when taken seriously, would themselves make such an aim impossible." The just citizen, the dependable father, the conscientious worker, the dutiful soldier, the devoted servant of God, the faithful husband, the loyal neighbor—all of these roles and more may jostle against each other in one man's life. And sometimes—not always or often, if we are fortunate, but sometimes—the commitment to be, say, a dependable father may mean that this man must relinquish, must set aside and sacrifice, the commitment to be a conscientious worker or (dare one say?) a just citizen.

Perhaps it will be possible to rank these several commitments in such a way that we can bring unity into life, but two things must be noted. First, it will not be possible to do this without *sacrifice* of some of these goods. And, second, this kind of unity can never be provided by political community so long as one of the commitments on our list continues to be "devoted servant of God." The language of self-sacrifice cannot be excised from the Christian moral lexicon. How could it be when "the second degree of humility" in the Rule of St. Benedict is "that a person love not his own will nor take pleasure in satisfying his desires, but model his actions on the saying of the Lord, 'I have come not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.'"

In part the problem is that concern for others has from the outset been set within the context of one's own flourishing. Not, to be sure, as if one's own good constituted the reason for helping others. Still, for MacIntyre, moral action is set within a framework of self-realization. The teleological starting point requires it. In making others' good my good, I flourish—I realize my nature as a human being.

There is, I think, a better way for Christians to start. We come to know ourselves not only as striving, purposive, goal-oriented beings but also as moral agents within a community of others in whom we recognize a being and dignity like our own. In recognizing my own dignity I must recognize the dignity of others like me. Morality is, therefore, not only a matter of developing the virtues needed to flourish

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but also a matter of recognizing obligations toward others who also bear the human countenance and are equal to us in dignity.

Unlike MacIntyre's Aristotelian starting point, this gets us out of our own skins from the outset, and it raises the possibility that when, sometimes, the good of several of our fellow human beings conflict, sacrifice may be called for. Sacrifice of this sort cannot be the norm for political action, of course, since too often the strong would decide that the weak should make sacrifices. In the political realm, therefore, we will have to aim, as best we can, at justice—serving the needs of many by treating all as stones laid in a row, having equal dignity and equal claim upon us.

This will not, of course, entirely overcome the fragmentation of life or provide a unified life. What, then, of my own flourishing? Must I regard it as of no account? Not exactly. If we grant that moral agency is grounded not only in self-realization (Aristotle's *eudaimonia*) but also in a recognition of the claim of others upon us (put Christianly, in love for the neighbor), we acknowledge that self-sacrifice may be needed. But we also make place for the virtue of hope. We learn to hope that there may be a more self-sufficient and more satisfying city yet to come than any polis of our own making. In hope we are able to see that virtue is not (simply) its own reward, that our flourishing as human beings does not consist simply in virtuous activity. For we can flourish, after all, only if we look upon the face of God, and that vision is not at our disposal. We must hope for it as a gift.

None of this is meant to deny the magnitude of MacIntyre's achievement. But we are, I think, still waiting for another St. Benedict. These are deep and important issues. To take our own flourishing—rather than the neighbor's need—as our starting point for ethics is problematic. That virtue brings with it a certain kind of fulfillment and happiness we may grant, but human beings cannot live by such happiness alone. As Josef Pieper put it: "The deepest thirst cannot be allayed in this way." It is hope for a gift that is not at our disposal that best displays the fundamental neediness of the creature—especially of creatures such as the *dependent*, rational animals that we are. FT

The Conservation of Matter

The fat man sitting
on the edge of his bath
may feel a surge of cheerful vanity
admiring his calves
and vast feet. Enormous things
in a trivial world—
who appreciates beauty?
He sips from bourbon
gliding over ice cubes.
Logically, we extend ourselves in the world.
A handsome symmetry exists
between the thoroughness of construction
and the likelihood of movement
although the volume remains the same
despite the size or shape of the container.

Still, no dog, no matter where or when
he may have acquired his feet,
can walk his chains without getting tangled.
It is this confusion between magnitude and grace
that allows beauty to evade our grasp.

Samn Stockwell

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST RULE OF REPORTING:
WHERE THERE'S SMOKE THERE'S A PR MACHINE.

>LBO MADNESS STORY: WORKING OUTSIDE THE BEAT

7/15
Matt Schifrin's got hunch on story. Heard about billions pouring into some leveraged buyout funds and insane returns...80-100% when a great mutual fund returns like 30%. Industry insiders would chalk it up to genius of such and such fund manager. Red flag: if looks too good to be true, it's probably hype.

7/17
Time for Schifrin to dig. Call LBO's? They'd just give him a nice fluffy take on the industry and hope he types it up. He needs to look at these guys' numbers. Tabloid guys dig through trash. Schifrin digs through financial documents.

7/20
Bingo! Got a hold of some fund's memoranda. They're basically big marketing documents. And they've all got one thing in common – this funny math formula. Schifrin called one of the big leveraged buyout guys...told him calculations seemed bogus. He just laughed. Hello story.

>BUSINESS REPORTING AS TOUGH AS BUSINESS ITSELF>

www.forbes.com

JUL.28.1998 4:57PM NO.786 P.1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books In Review

Separation Anxiety

The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity. By Leon J. Podles. *Spence. 350 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by **Daniel P. Moloney**

Leon Podles has his finger on something very important. A symptom of the problem Podles has discovered is this: men don't like church. To be more precise, *masculine* men have a problem with Christianity, at least in its Western forms. In Eastern Orthodox churches (at least according to Podles) men participate in services and other religious activities as much or more than do women, while in Roman Catholic and Protestant churches the women outnumber the men, sometimes by wide margins.

Podles does not believe sociology can explain this disparity. Instead he argues that Christianity itself has become "feminized." During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, he says, Christian piety underwent a dramatic change, so that where before it appealed to masculine ideals, it has appealed to feminine ones ever since. Podles attributes this change to St. Bernard of Clairvaux's introduction of bridal mysticism, a way of praying in which the believer uses "erotic" language from the Song of Songs to express his love for Christ. Bridal mysticism appealed to women very much; from the thirteenth-century explosion of women's orders until today, the image of being the spouse of Christ has been a favorite of Christian women. To men, however, praying as if one were the bride of a male Christ took on "sexual overtones that sound peculiar to the masculine ear." As more women filled the pews, and as the more masculine realm of theology became too scholarly for use in homilies, Podles believes, preachers leaned on bridal mysticism to appeal to their congregations, thereby perpetuating the feminization of Christian piety begun by St. Bernard.

In response, he tells us, men have done their best to avoid churches, sublimating their religious instincts into sports, soldiering, fraternal organizations, and even fascism. Insofar as they do express their religious impulses, they do so outside the churches through extreme penances (Podles tells with relish of the men in some Latin countries who will actually hang on crosses for a short time), or by joining men's movements like the Knights of Columbus or Promise Keepers. Podles thinks this pattern will persist indefinitely and that men will continue to attend church only grudgingly.

The Church Impotent breaks new ground in identifying and explaining this phenomenon. For this reason, the book has received considerable attention and praise. Too much, perhaps, for Podles' argument is riddled with contradictions, historical inaccuracies, and errors in reasoning that almost entirely undermine his central thesis.

To begin with, there's the historical evidence that bridal mysticism predated Bernard of Clairvaux. Podles recognizes one antecedent, claiming that Bernard got his inspiration from the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* of the early Christian writer Origen, "whose heterodoxy makes him a dubious authority." The problem with this historically is that Origen wrote in Greek, and Bernard probably did not read Greek. He is more likely to have had access to the Latin works of the unquestionably orthodox St. Ambrose, who spoke of the individual's soul *conubii foedere copulatur*, "joined in bonds of matrimony" to God, and who often used the Song in his homilies and liturgical works.

Bridal mysticism can be found in the patristic period in both the Greek and Latin Churches, and has its roots in Scripture (especially in the Song of Songs and 2 Corinthians 11:2). If bridal mysticism is responsible for scaring men away from the Church, then it should have done so much earlier than the twelfth century, and in the Eastern Churches as well. Furthermore, it cannot be the explanation for the "feminization" of twentieth-century mainline Protestantism, which lacks any hints of bridal mysticism, except, perhaps, in some forms of feminism.

Podles needs to locate the beginning of "feminization" in the twelfth century with Bernard rather than in the fourth with Ambrose or the third with Origen because he wants to show that Christianity is not inherently off-putting to men. Podles has constructed his argument on the premises that 1) if Christianity is not attracting men it must be because it is feminized, and 2) Christianity is not inherently feminized. He can hardly acknowledge the possibility that attracting men has been a problem throughout Church history. We have no idea whether men in antiquity showed a greater commitment to Christianity than did women, although Podles assumes this to be the case. We do know of prominent early Christian men (Timothy, Constantine, Augustine) who were brought to the Church by their wives or mothers, just as many men are today, but we don't know whether this was the norm.

In the absence of hard evidence, Podles presents something of a transcendental deduction over the middle chapters of his book to support his conviction that in its first millennium the Church was more attractive to men. Surveying the psychological literature of child development and the anthropological literature of tribal societies, Podles develops a not-implausible theory of masculinity. He then takes this notion of masculinity and finds it all over the Bible. From

Daniel P. Moloney *is Associate Editor of* First Things.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO

the thirteenth annual

ERASMUS LECTURE

presented by

CHARLES COLSON

Chairman,
Prison Fellowship Ministries

**"The 21st Century:
The Coming Evangelical Renewal"**

At six o'clock, Wednesday, November 3, at the
Union League Club, 38 East 37th Street - New York City

Sponsored by
First Things and the Institute on Religion and Public Life.
For free ticket(s) (please indicate one or two), write:

Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400,
New York, NY 10010

CIVITAS

Fellowship applications are being accepted for the Pew Civitas Program in Faith and Public Affairs

Civitas is a program of civic education and leadership development for Christian doctoral students. *Civitas* scholars participate in a fully-funded, five-week summer institute on Faith, Politics and Public Policy and may apply for a four-month fellowship as a *Civitas* Fellow with the American Enterprise Institute or The Brookings Institution. For application material and more information contact: Keith Pavlischek, Director, *Civitas*, Center for Public Justice, P.O. Box 48368, Washington DC 20002, civitas@cpjustice.org, 410-571-6300

Application Deadline: December 1, 1999

Participating Organizations
American Enterprise Institute
The Brookings Institution
Center For Public Justice

this he concludes that the early, more biblical, Christianity must have been masculine, because it reflected what, thanks to modern social science, we now understand to be masculinity.

Masculinity is not a mere function of biological maleness, Podles tells us. According to the developmental psychologists he cites, it is a state boys achieve through a difficult three-stage process. In infancy boys and girls both identify psychologically with their mothers, existing "in an oceanic consciousness, in which the mother and child merge into one, blissful, erotic identity." Boys become masculine only if they break this oedipal attachment, thus opening a "psychic wound" that is the basis of their inchoate masculinity. If a boy fails to "dis-identify" with his mother and identifies instead with his father, he fails to achieve masculinity, and is likely to become homosexual, masochistic, misogynistic, or pedophilic. Podles cites anthropological research which sees tribal initiation rites as the paradigmatic way for boys to separate from their mothers and to be socialized as male. In more complex modern societies, however, boys undergo "no such rites of passage, and they must face every test afresh, not knowing whether they have yet proved themselves men." Only after the initial union and the separation from the mother can a boy learn to love a woman as another distinct human being rather than as another version of himself.

Podles takes these scientific conclusions and misapplies them, essentially arguing the following: Psychoerotic separation is characteristic of the masculine; a psychoerotic separation is a separation; therefore, separation itself is characteristic of the masculine. He implausibly generalizes that any separation of any sort indicates masculinity—and he perpetuates this logical error throughout the book, reducing his argument to a kind of caricature: Because He transcends creation, "God is, therefore, utterly *separate* from creation. . . . A transcendent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

God is a masculine God." Podles claims that God's separating the light from the dark proves his masculinity. The Israelite patriarchs sinned whenever fleshly "communion with the wife" led one of them to "feminization, to the loss of separation that makes him a man," as with Adam, David, and Solomon. Abraham "fell prey to uxoriousness" and had to recover his separation by sacrificing Isaac. In Exodus, God makes a distinction between the Israelites and Egyptians, continuing "to act in a masculine way."

One might think that the unprecedented "communion" of the persons of the Trinity might indicate that the New Testament offers a less separate, more "feminine" version of God. Not so, says Podles. The New Testament tells us explicitly that God is Father and Son, and that we are all called to "initiation" (i.e., baptism) and martyrdom. Jesus introduces "a new principle of separation: no longer observance of the Law, but faith in him," and takes the cross like a man. ("Masculinity entails initiation; initiation involves pain—the greater the pain, the more profound the initiation.") In the Apocalypse, we discover that Christ's enemy is Satan, and the true Christian life is shown to be spiritual warfare (a masculine image).

This is pretty silly stuff. Podles has other historical missteps as well, too numerous to mention here. (My favorite is his discussion of the Scholastics. If he is right about the identification of masculinity with the making of distinctions, these hyperprecise university professors would have been the alpha-males of the Middle Ages!) Part of his problem comes from relying entirely on secondary sources, particularly historians who, in this area, are mostly feminists. Throughout his argument, he allows the feminists to set the terms of the debate, all the while decrying the "feminist spirituality" they claim to have discovered.

Podles should be commended for asking a provocative question provocatively. If we want a plausible explanation for the phenomenon he addresses, however, we will have to wait for a different book.

Contradictions of Modernism

Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism. By T. J. Clark. *Yale University Press. 451 pp. $45.*

***Reviewed by* Robert W. Jenson**

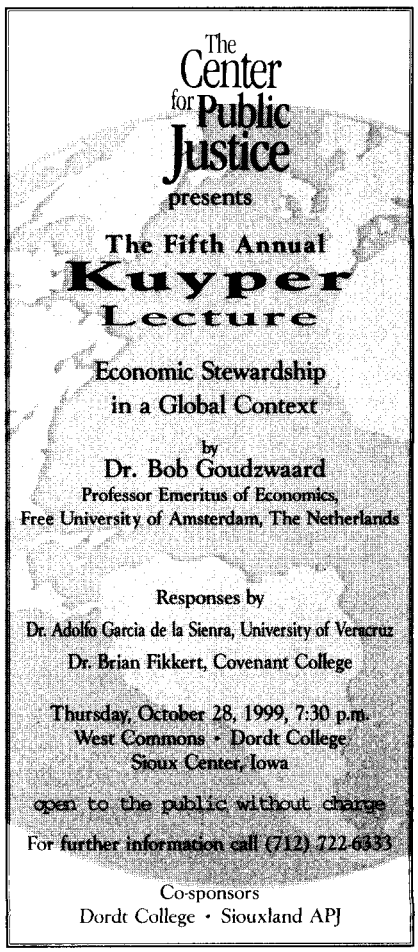
I had better put the news right up front: this is a wonderful book, by a Marxist art critic. To be sure, Professor Clark is Marxist in the way of the offended consciousness—he is Marxist as, say, Ingmar Bergman is Lutheran. He takes no stock in dialectical materialism or any other mechanistic reading of history; he regards all attempts to build socialism as nightmares; he knows that the one thing revolutions do is devour their children; and a modernism he clearly loathes is "suprematism," the fine-art branch of Leninist propaganda. Nevertheless, his book is an exercise in class analysis; if he hangs his heart on anything it is the promise of a stateless society; his God is unidentified but he names capitalism his Satan; and he teaches at the University of California at Berkeley.

I praise the book because reading it has transformed—no weaker word will do—my ability to see the modernist paintings I have long loved. I am sure the transformation is much for the better, that what I now see is really there. And there is doubtless some advantage in being told about the modernist painters by a critic who, as we will see, shares their own self-understanding.

Readers should be warned: any ordinary review of this book must somewhat mislead their expectations of it. For *Farewell to an Idea* is itself a modernist composition. It changes the subject unpredictably, it argues by irony and allusion, it loops and backs up, it quotes oracles—Hegel, Adorno, etc.—it defies grammar for the sport of it. Since I am writing a review for a relatively sober journal and command few Joycean devices, my attempt to represent the book's representation of modernist modes of representing must inevitably misrepresent (but see how with this sentence I have slipped in a low-rent bit of modernism).

Clark leads the eye on the canvas by going back and forth between detailed description of what is in the

Robert W. Jenson *is Senior Scholar for Research at the Princeton-based Center of Theological Inquiry.*


The Center for Public Justice
presents
The Fifth Annual
Kuyper Lecture
Economic Stewardship in a Global Context
by
Dr. Bob Goudzwaard
Professor Emeritus of Economics,
Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Responses by
Dr. Adolfo Garcia de la Sienra, University of Veracruz
Dr. Brian Fikkert, Covenant College
Thursday, October 28, 1999, 7:30 p.m.
West Commons • Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa
open to the public without charge
For further information call (712) 722-6333
Co-sponsors
Dordt College • Siouxland APJ

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most direct sense there—this patch of green here, that suggestion of shade there, the distance between hand prints in a drip painting of Pollock's—and almost equally detailed description of the ideological milieu within which the artist understood himself and his task ("his" is the word here; women appear in modernism's story mostly as objects of the painters' desires). One and all, the modernist painters were, or thought they were, revolutionaries—anarchists or radical collectivists or whatever—enemies of bourgeois ways in general and in their vocations enemies of the bourgeois representation of reality. "The task of art was held to be some . . . action against the codes and procedures by which the world was lent its usual likeness." I knew about the political allegiances of the modernists, but had not really connected that to how they painted. I should have.

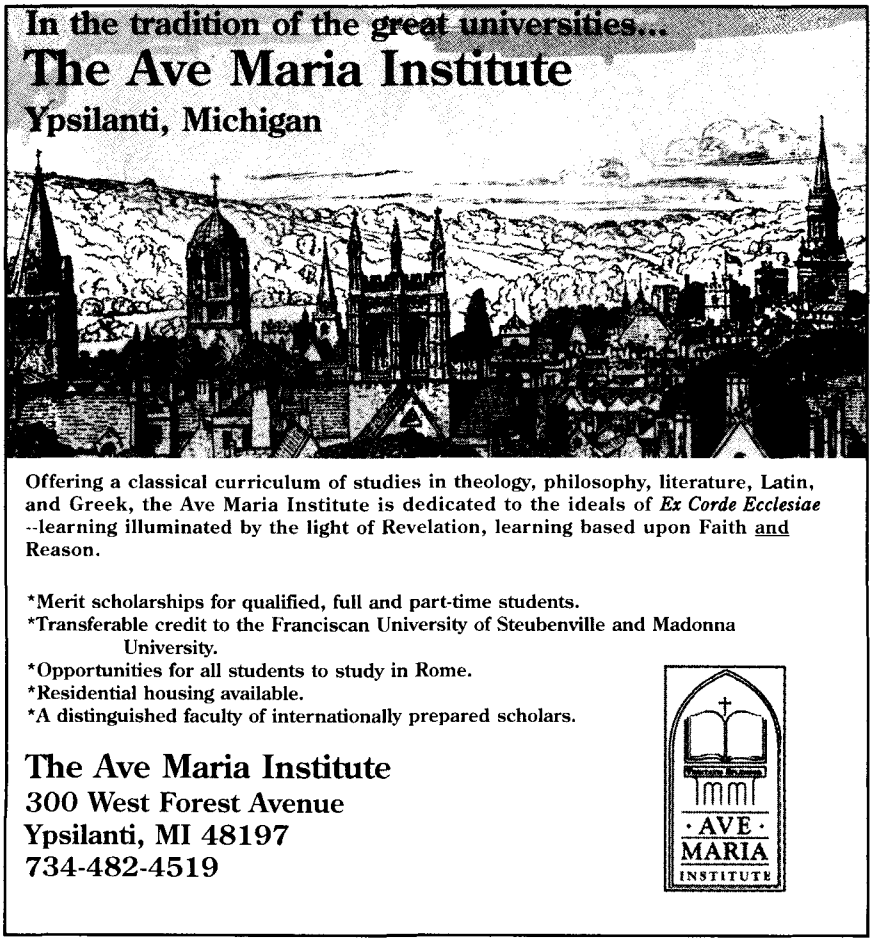
An example will be best. I read in my youth that cubism was the attempt to show all sides of an object at once on a two-dimensional surface, to dissemble and then frontally present surfaces of the object, so as to take the eye around the represented body in its space. And for a time I dutifully tried to see that in cubist paintings. But I could never make it work except with epigonal cubists, and finally gave it up to enjoy cubist works simply for the patterns they were, never mind what they were supposed to represent.

Once pointed out, it seems obvious: the great cubist works are attempts to do more or less the opposite of what I had been told. It is the bourgeois eye that wants to apprehend the world as a secure arrangement of objects in space and to find a vantage from which to see the world that way, and the devices of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century "illusionism"—shading, illumination, focal-point perspective, etc.—were the means by which painters served that eye. What Picasso did was to take all these devices and turn them against the kind of seeing they had served. He took bits and pieces of the surfaces that illusionist techniques had made represent bodies salient in space, and made them seem busily to do what they had formerly done, while in fact preventing them from doing so. What do they now represent? Sheerly something other than bourgeois spatial totality.

And that by itself is the point. Or so Clark claims, and I believe him, because it lets me see what is happening in the paintings.

Each chapter centers on a painting or group of paintings that in Clark's judgment marks a decisive moment in the history of modernism. One does not have to remember the paintings; the book is in general lavishly done—indeed in the surely self-ironizing style of a coffee-table book—and is well supplied with plates.

Every critic's chronology of modernism is a bit different. Clark stretches far back for a beginning; his first chapter is on David's *Death of Marat* of 1793. This, I have to say, reaches too far to convince me. It is possible to find antecedents for the art of any period in any earlier period you like, but they are best recognized as only antecedents. And it is too transparent why Clark stretches. Since he sees modernism as determined by modernity's hankering for revolution, he naturally wants to find a modernist painter among the makers of the paradigmatic revolution. And indeed, David's painting was hastily finished off to serve as the banner of a street demonstration by Robespierre's faction—a kind of thing you incidentally learn from this book. But the traces of modernist procedures Clark ferrets out in the painting itself hardly add up to what he elsewhere calls modernism.


In the tradition of the great universities...
The Ave Maria Institute
Ypsilanti, Michigan
Offering a classical curriculum of studies in theology, philosophy, literature, Latin, and Greek, the Ave Maria Institute is dedicated to the ideals of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* --learning illuminated by the light of Revelation, learning based upon Faith and Reason.
*Merit scholarships for qualified, full and part-time students.
*Transferable credit to the Franciscan University of Steubenville and Madonna University.
*Opportunities for all students to study in Rome.
*Residential housing available.
*A distinguished faculty of internationally prepared scholars.
The Ave Maria Institute
300 West Forest Avenue
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
734-482-4519
AVE MARIA INSTITUTE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The rest of his chronology is more usual: the central chapters treat of events just before and after the turn of the twentieth century. There are chapters centered on Pissarro's *Two Young Peasant Women*, Cezanne's late pictures of *Bathers*, Picasso's classic cubism between 1909 and 1913, and the suprematists during the years of "war communism." Then come chapters on modernism in extremis: Pollock's big drip paintings, which Clark regards as truly great in their extremity, and the most vulgar (his word) of the abstract expressionist work.

Clark's general thesis, if he can be said to have one, is that great modernist paintings are great precisely in virtue of the impossibility of the task they set themselves. Every more than routine modernist painting is an attempt to solve a finally insoluble problem: how to make paintings at all within a bourgeois society whose inner contradiction is becoming ever more extreme.

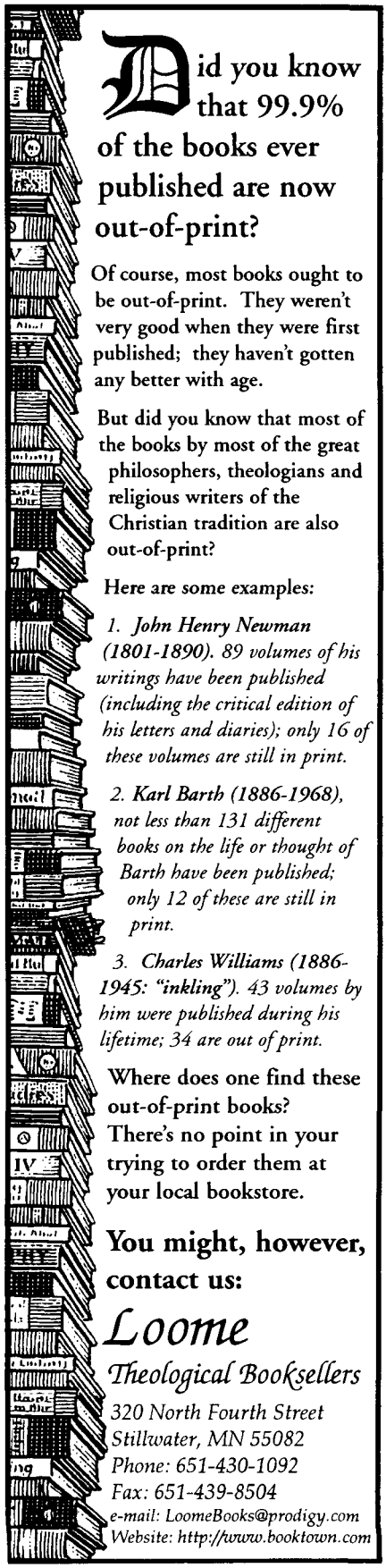
Clark's understanding of the bourgeois project and its doom strikingly resembles Karl Barth's. I must here rather brutally summarize his various approaches: we bourgeois want both to grasp reality as a reliable comprehensible totality out there and to be the autonomous and so finally arbitrary manipulators of the signs by which we grasp it. Revolution, political or painterly, breaks out at the clash between these incompatible wants. And there is nihilism at its heart, for revolutionaries know the totality they want to destroy but in their constituting autonomy and contingency cannot know a totality to create. Clark finds the most explicit evocation of modernity's inner longing for nothingness in the black square obsessively painted by the suprematist guru Malevich.

Modernist painting's problem is finally insoluble because painting itself is part and parcel of the way the bourgeoisie represents the world to itself. Modernist painting wants to represent, but differently, indeed antithetically. Yet painters cannot simply inhabit some other society, nor abandon the procedures of putting paint on a canvas of such and such dimensions by which painting is constituted as an activity. An easel painting, after all, is an object made to be sold in the market, for bourgeois interior decoration, and the means and techniques of such painting are those developed to represent reality the bourgeois way.

Again an example will be best. I had read the bodies in Cezanne's late paintings of *Bathers* simply as late-impressionist nudes patterned to the modernist grid and colors of the composition, and taken pleasure in the nudes and the pattern. But if you look at what Clark tells you to look at, you see that the nudes are in fact in process of dissolution as human bodies; they are turning into sheer flesh, indeed, into materializations of erotic dreaming, given some structure not by their humanity but only by the rather mechanical grid of the canvas. And, indeed, Cezanne was philosophically a materialist. One step more on this path and Cezanne would produce mere horrors or banalities. The paintings are great in the struggle between the temptation of Cezanne's ideology and his invincible vocation.

Although he does not want to say so, Clark clearly thinks that modernist painting has run out its string. Nor does he see anything replacing it. Modernity's general project must undo itself, and so far offers no successor. We are left with the totalizing empty state and the mere individual with his or her arbitrary self-expressing little signs, and no space between them where art and many other things should be. Clark ends his book: "The present is purgatory, not a permanent travesty of heaven." It is a pure statement of unfounded faith. One is reminded of the famous ending of Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*.

But whither this St. Benedict?



Did you know that 99.9% of the books ever published are now out-of-print?

Of course, most books ought to be out-of-print. They weren't very good when they were first published; they haven't gotten any better with age.

But did you know that most of the books by most of the great philosophers, theologians and religious writers of the Christian tradition are also out-of-print?

Here are some examples:

1. *John Henry Newman (1801-1890). 89 volumes of his writings have been published (including the critical edition of his letters and diaries); only 16 of these volumes are still in print.*

2. *Karl Barth (1886-1968), not less than 131 different books on the life or thought of Barth have been published; only 12 of these are still in print.*

3. *Charles Williams (1886-1945: "inkling"). 43 volumes by him were published during his lifetime; 34 are out of print.*

Where does one find these out-of-print books? There's no point in your trying to order them at your local bookstore.

You might, however, contact us:

Loome
Theological Booksellers
320 North Fourth Street
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-430-1092
Fax: 651-439-8504
e-mail: LoomeBooks@prodigy.com
Website: http://www.booktown.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Justice Thomas and Liberal Originalism

FIRST PRINCIPLES: THE JURISPRUDENCE OF CLARENCE THOMAS. By SCOTT DOUGLAS GERBER. *New York University Press. 201 pp. $30.*

***Reviewed by* Lucas E. Morel**

IT SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE that a book devoted to winnowing the law and politics arising from Justice Clarence Thomas' appointment and tenure on the Supreme Court was written by a lawyer-slash-political scientist. Scott Douglas Gerber holds both the J.D. and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. And while his professed "legal realism" leads him on occasion to misread Justice Thomas as a political and judicial theorist, *First Principles: The Jurisprudence of Clarence Thomas* provides the most comprehensive and incisive account of Thomas' political philosophy to date.

LUCAS E. MOREL *is Assistant Professor of Political Science and History at John Brown University in Arkansas and an adjunct fellow of the Claremont Institute.*

Gerber, who teaches at both the College of William and Mary and its law school, made his mark as a political scientist by turning his doctoral dissertation into a book, *To Secure These Rights: The Declaration of Independence and Constitutional Interpretation* (1995). It argues for a Lincolnian appeal to the Declaration as a guide to constitutional adjudication, a thesis ultimately deriving from the seminal analysis of the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates by Harry V. Jaffa in *Crisis of the House Divided* (1959).

IN A FRAGMENT penned before his first inauguration as President, Lincoln highlighted the "philosophical cause" of America's greatness as "the principle of 'Liberty to all.'" He went on to write that the "expression of that principle, in our Declaration of Independence, was most happy and fortunate," for it gave the American colonists something worth fighting for—"the promise of something better than a mere change of masters." *To Secure These Rights* argued that "the Constitution should be interpreted in light of the natural rights political philosophy of the Declaration of Independence"—an approach Gerber calls "liberal originalism."

Gerber says *First Principles* is a "sort of sequel" to his earlier book, suggesting an affinity for the prominence of the Declaration of Independence in Justice Thomas' political and constitutional thought. This is not to say he finds Justice Thomas' jurisprudence entirely consistent with his own conception of how the Declaration should inform constitutional interpretation. He makes a distinction between "liberal" originalism and what he calls "conservative" originalism. More on this later. Nevertheless, Gerber delights in finding a constitutional soul mate on the high court, and *First Principles* presents a sympathetic but not uncritical assessment of Justice Thomas' first five years there.

The "unusually vitriolic" assessments of Clarence Thomas before and after his appointment to the Supreme Court, Gerber suggests, were sparked by his conservative credentials as a black man of influence. Because Thomas did not mouth the conventional platitudes and policies of the civil rights establishment, he was branded a traitor and worse. Gerber concludes that "Justice Thomas' record is almost always judged against

POPULATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE
STEVEN W. MOSHER, PRESIDENT
ANNOUNCES

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA:
FIFTY YEARS LATER

International Conference
19-20 November
Capital Hilton, Washington, DC

China's Communist Government Heightens Its Persecution Against Christians

- Christians continue to be arrested and jailed for praying and worshipping outside government control.
- In recent months this effort has intensified.
- There is continued persecution against the 60 million Catholics and Protestants who refuse to denounce the basics of their faith or "register" in a government approved church.

Be informed... and find out what you can do!

Early registration rates ends Sept. 30, so please contact PRI's Associate Program Coordinator
Michele Madasz: Email: Michele@pop.org; Phone: (540) 622-5252 *OR REGISTER ON OUR WEBSITE:* www.pop.org.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the benchmark of partisanship" from both liberal and conservative camps—a problem he aims to rectify.

Gerber argues that "being a government official and not an academician" hampered Judge Thomas' efforts before the Senate Judiciary Committee to present a consistent account of his judicial philosophy. But recall what happened to Mr. Consistency himself, Robert H. Bork, at his confirmation hearing four years earlier. Unfortunately, Thomas' year and a half as a circuit court judge gave him little time to resolve several constitutional questions that have divided legal scholars and the American public for much of the Court's history—and it showed.

But could Thomas really have persuaded Senator Joseph Biden, the Delaware Democrat who chaired the Judiciary Committee hearings, that the Declaration of Independence's "natural law" principles applied to *Lochner v. New York* (1905) or *Roe v. Wade* (1973) without showing an apparent bias in future cases? Biden had chided Judge Bork previously for not knowing that his rights derived from his humanity under God. Recall also that confirmation hearings are job interviews. That requires a certain finessing of one's judicial philosophy.

No surprise, then, that Thomas would move gradually from a pro-defendant's jurisprudence at his confirmation hearing to a critic of the Warren Court's "rights revolution" once on the Court. Gerber points out that Justice Thomas tied his concern for "recognizing the criminal defendant's free will and moral responsibility" to the problem of race. Thomas acknowledged the high-mindedness of modern liberals in their effort "to stop society from treating blacks, the poor, and others . . . as if they were invisible, not worthy of attention," only to add, "But the [rights] revolution missed a larger point by merely changing their status from invisible to victimized." With a voice reminiscent of Frederick Douglass and Ralph Ellison, Thomas concluded, "Minorities and the poor are humans—capable of dignity as well as shame, folly as well as success. We should be treated as such."

Gerber highlights the importance of Thomas' commitment to natural law as a jurist. It is important that Thomas the nominee did not disavow his commitment to natural law, for without the natural law to guide the positive laws of human society, what is to keep government from abusing its authority? This applies even to republican governments. There the political supremacy of legislative majorities

Seventh Annual

AQUINAS / LUTHER CONFERENCE

November 7-9, 1999

AQUINAS AND LUTHER ON THE HOLY TRINITY

Keynote Address: Otto Hermann Pesch *Banquet Address:* Phillip M. Johnson

Lectures:

William Cavanaugh • Brian Daley • Robert Jenson • William Lazareth

Registration Fee $70. For complete information, contact:

The Center for Theology
J. Larry Yoder, *Director*

Box 7533, Lenoir-Rhyne College, Hickory, NC 28603
(828) 328-7276 or 328-7376 FAX 328-7368
http://www.stnm.org/CenterforTheology

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

requires not only some system of checks and balances to stave off the factions that have been endemic to democracies and republics everywhere, but also an understanding common to citizen and ruler alike that not all things are allowed—even with political majorities behind them.

So when he responded to questions from Senator Edward M. Kennedy about his praise of Justice Antonin Scalia's lone dissent in the now infamous independent counsel case, *Morrison v. Olson* (1988), Thomas argued that a "lack of accountability could actually undermine the individual freedom of the person who is being investigated." Given that Thomas "spent almost his entire professional life in government service," one wonders how he would have understood his career as a public servant if he was not so beholden to what Gerber calls "a classical liberal interpretation of America's founding moment."

When one views the Supreme Court as "the principal guardian of the people's natural rights," as Gerber did in *To Secure These Rights*, a reliance on a "higher law" jurisprudence becomes indispensable. Of course, Justice Thomas would be the last current Justice, even behind Justice Scalia, to put forward the Supreme Court as the fundamental guarantor of individual rights. Justice Thomas would agree with *Federalist No. 78*, which states that while "the courts of justice are to be considered as the bulwarks of a limited constitution against legislative encroachments," it is the limited constitution itself that provides the best security against tyranny.

As Justice Thomas reasoned in his concurring opinion in *U.S. v. Lopez* (1995), which overturned a federal gun-free school zone law enacted under the Commerce Clause, upholding the law would be handing Congress "a blank check" by giving them "a 'police power' over all aspects of American life." He understood the Constitution as granting Congress enumerated powers precisely in those areas where the prevailing "substantial effects" test would apply. His concurrence thus invited a reexamination of the post-New Deal Court's expansion of Congress' authority under the Commerce Clause. Not even Justice Scalia accepted the invitation.

THE CENTRAL THESIS of *First Principles*, at least as it regards Gerber's critique of Justice Thomas as a natural rights jurist, is distinguishing Justice Thomas the "liberal originalist" (like Gerber) from Justice Thomas the "conservative originalist" (like Justices Scalia and William Rehnquist). On civil rights issues—namely, desegregation, voting rights, and affirmative action—Justice Thomas holds true to the ideal of human equality as the lodestar for judicial decision-making. But in cases dealing with federalism and with civil liberties—e.g., criminal justice, the religion clauses, and free speech—Justice Thomas subscribes to the traditional "original intent" school, which holds fast to the constitutional framers' "specific intentions—as manifested in the text and historical context of the Constitution."

As Gerber understands Justice Thomas, the individual should reign supreme among the Supremes. When judging government actions that restrict individual liberty, the Justices should hearken to the Declaration of Independence's clarion call to secure the equal rights of individuals in the face of potential encroachment by state and federal government. This "first principle" of Justice Thomas, the primacy of the individual, may very well stand as his signal contribution to a nominally conservative Court. Or so Gerber would argue, even as he points out Justice Thomas' reinvigoration of

herder&herder

A Herder & Herder Selection

An insightful and entertaining insider's account of the Synod for America and its significance for the future of the Church in America, North and South

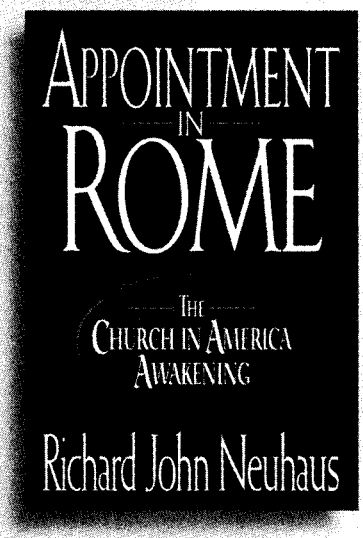
Richard John Neuhaus

Appointment in Rome

The Church in America Awakening

"More than a mere account of the Synod, *Appointment in Rome* is a vivid portrait of the Church in the time of John Paul II, and a profound reflection on her mission in the postmodern world."
—**Mary Ann Glendon**, Harvard University

"I learned much from *Appointment in Rome* about the Synod of America, even though I had faithfully attended every session. Vintage Neuhaus."
—**John Cardinal O'Connor**



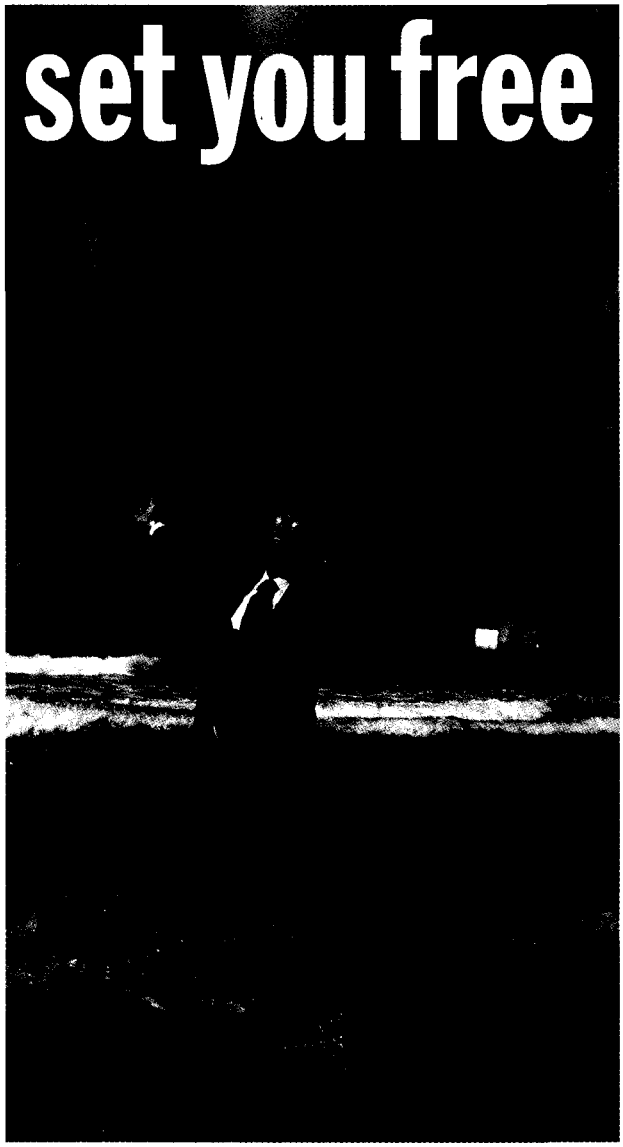
0-8245-1555-2 $24.95 paperback, 240 pages

THE CROSSROAD PUBLISHING COMPANY
370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017

At your bookstore or call
800-395-0690

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The truth will set you free



There's something downright invigorating about knowing the truth. No unanswered questions. No cynicism or self-serving misinformation from clever folks in expensive suits. Just the certainty that no matter what happens you will be well-informed and ready to meet the world.

Does that sound good to you?

If so, we'd like to send you 4 Free Issues of *The Washington Times National Weekly Edition*, the only nationally circulated newspaper in the country with the courage and conviction to cover the news honestly.

Every week, we'll bring you a fresh, honest, unbiased look at the people and events that shape the news in Washington D.C. and around the world. No spin. No hidden agenda. Just vigorous, unapologetic journalism and clean, crisp writing.

Isn't it about time you embraced the truth?

The Washington Times
A flood of testimony engulfs the president
Depositions depict sex addict
Congress threatens legal team
New York City adopts uniforms for its public schools

Try It FREE!

No Risk . . .No Cost . . .No Obligation!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____ Phone _____

Call 1-800-363-9118. (Mention express code: 1979)

Call today or mail in the coupon and order 4 weeks of The Washington Times National Weekly Edition free of charge! If you like it, you'll receive 48 more issues, for a total of 52, and pay only $59.95. If you decide not to subscribe, simply write "cancel" on your invoice and owe nothing at all. The 4 sample copies will be yours to keep!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a respect for the constitutional structure as a substantive means of securing the rights of individual Americans.

Gerber gets sidetracked when he tries to develop Thomas' alleged "marrying of law and politics" as a Justice. Here, Gerber the "legal realist" gets the better of himself. Perhaps it's a bona fide conviction that "we are all [legal] realists now" and therefore Justice Thomas is not excluded, or merely an attempt to mollify fashionable opinion by offering painstakingly "equal time" to supporters and detractors of Clarence Thomas (only to shoot down both sides as partisan hacks).

Gerber seems not to notice that his own theory of constitutional interpretation requires that Justices rise above mere politics to a level of reflection and choice that enables them to secure justice for the parties to an issue. How can Gerber be a "realist" if power politics and a judge's policy preferences undermine all attempts to ensure that the Constitution stands as the benchmark for judicial decision-making?

Civil rights for Judge Thomas before his Senate inquisitors amounted to individual, not group, rights, coupled with the responsibility to make the most of one's freedoms. Of course, Gerber highlights that as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) in the Reagan Administration, Thomas was never reluctant to "defend anyone who could show that she or he was personally discriminated against." But where government acted forcefully in its limited capacity to secure an individual's right to pursue happiness, Thomas believed the true remedy for poverty or lack of opportunity due to discrimination by race (or gender or age) was "self-help." In Lincolnian fashion, Thomas believes that a person's own resolve to succeed is the single most important determinant of success.

This latter concern that individuals be protected only from external interference with their inalienable right to govern themselves coincides with the related issue of economic rights. Citing a 1987 speech to the Business Law section of the American Bar Association, Gerber shows that Thomas believes that pitting property versus personal rights is a false dichotomy: "What we need to emphasize is that the entire Constitution is a Bill of Rights; and economic rights are protected as much as any other rights."

Gerber's evaluation of Thomas as a Justice unfortunately falls a bit short because he misreads the meaning of equality in the Declaration of Independence. Calling equality an "ideal" yet to be achieved, Gerber takes the opportunity to praise Critical Race Theorists, of all people, for supposedly "reminding those of us who are not minorities that, unfortunately, racism still exists in America." Borrowing from Gunnar Myrdal's magnum opus, *The American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944), Gerber sees race as *the* longstanding problem of the American regime.

But as Harry Jaffa pointed out in *Crisis of the House Divided*, not race but the equality/consent principle of the Declaration of Independence poses the intractable challenge for the American experiment in self-government. "Now the opinion of the governed," Jaffa observed, "unfortunately for the utopians of this world, does not always favor the full and unequivocal recognition of that very equality which, alas, constitutes the title deeds of its own authority."

While the protection of each citizen's equal right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" may be lacking, public opinion as the practical expression of "the consent of the governed" stands as the only just means of securing individual rights. The raison d'être of a republican statesman is to inform public opinion so as to provide that security. As Thomas Jefferson put it, "Though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression."

Turning fifty-one this year (by far the youngest member of the Court), and finding himself eight years into

Expanding Humanity's Vision of God
A John Templeton Foundation Program
A program of prizes for newly published essays & sermons
on the theme:
"Expanding humanity's vision of God – can we have a more comprehensive, more exploratory, more humble theology?"
Deadline extended to March 1, 2000
Details available at: www.templeton.org/ehvg
70 prizes of $3,500, 10 prizes of $5,000, $10,000 grand prize.
or send name, address, and email address to: Robert L. Herrmann, Ph.D., Program Director
Gordon College, 255 Grapevine Road, Wenham, MA 01984
Fax: (978) 524-3752; Email: herrmann@gordon.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his Supreme Court tenure, Justice Thomas is only going to get better. With Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and John Paul Stevens nearing retirement, the Court is poised for a philosophical shift when the next President and Senate fill these seats. And with Justice Scalia an unlikely candidate to be the next Chief Justice, were a conservative President to be elected, an opportunity might present itself for Justice Thomas to step up as a seasoned, principled candidate for the position. Reading Gerber's near-definitive work offers a glimpse of an "originalist" jurisprudence that could restore the principles and structure of the Constitution to their former glory.

Winning Hearts and Minds

Speaking of Abortion: Television and Authority in the Lives of Women. By Andrea L. Press and Elizabeth R. Cole. *University of Chicago Press. 223 pp. $25.*

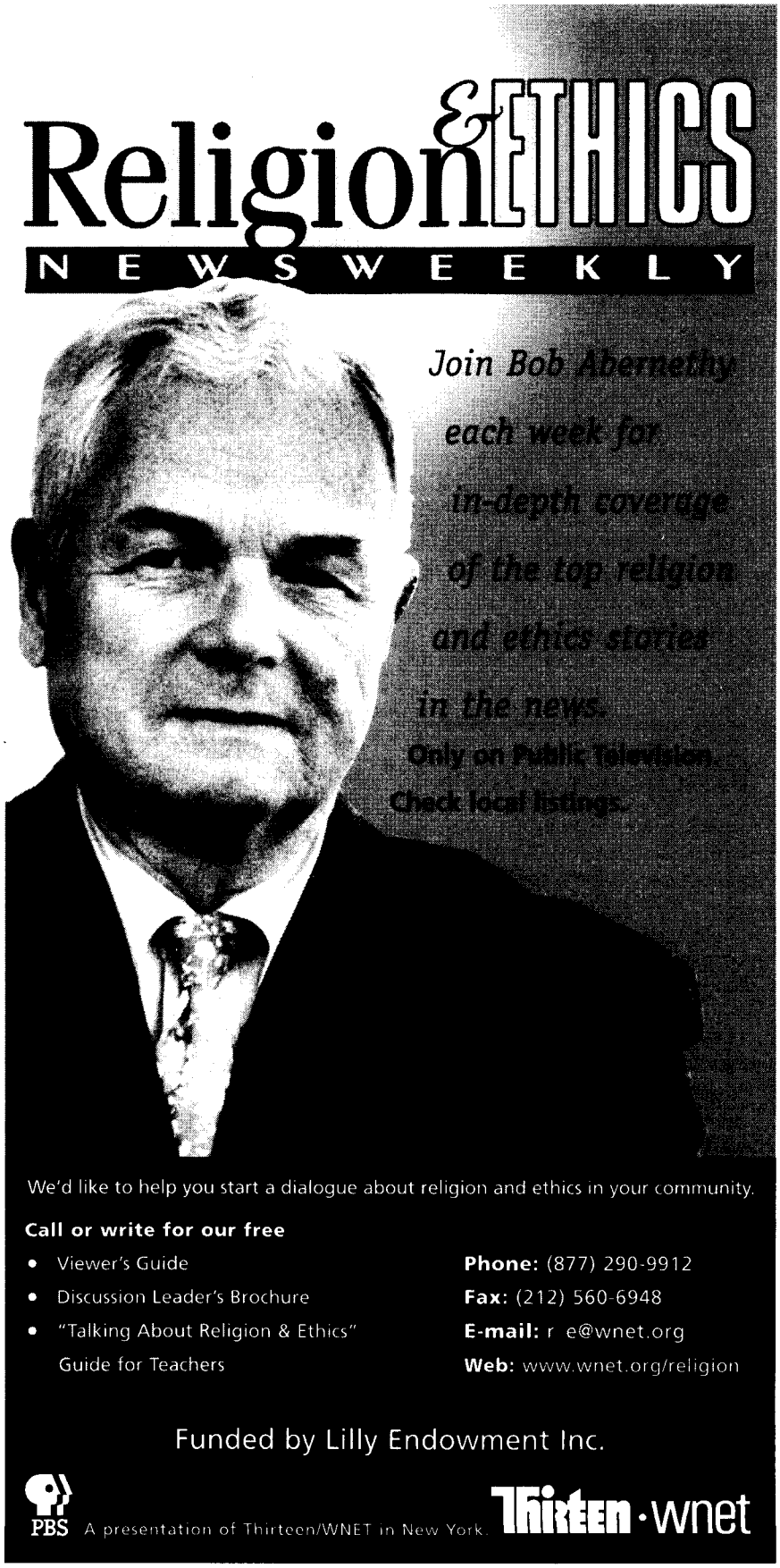
***Reviewed by* Paul F. Swope**

It was flattering to be asked to write a book review for First Things. Then I opened the assigned book. Immediately I suspected that this was instead a punishment, a subtle revenge by the editors for something offensive I had said or written in the past.

What other conclusion could be reached when asked to read a book which begins:

> Each individual feminist knower is also multiple in a way that mirrors the situation of women as a class. It is the thinker whose consciousness is bifurcated, the outsider within, the marginal person now also located at the center, the person,

Paul F. Swope *is Northeast Project Director of the Caring Foundation and President of LifeNet Services, Inc.*


Religion & ETHICS
NEWSWEEKLY
Join Bob Abernethy each week for in-depth coverage of the top religion and ethics stories in the news.
Only on Public Television.
Check local listings.
We'd like to help you start a dialogue about religion and ethics in your community.
Call or write for our free
• Viewer's Guide
• Discussion Leader's Brochure
• "Talking About Religion & Ethics" Guide for Teachers
Phone: (877) 290-9912
Fax: (212) 560-6948
E-mail: r e@wnet.org
Web: www.wnet.org/religion
Funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.
PBS
A presentation of Thirteen/WNET in New York.
Thirteen·wnet

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> committed to two agendas that are themselves at least partially in conflict (socialist feminist, black feminist, Jewish feminist, woman scientist), who has generated feminist sciences and new knowledges.

Indeed, such an opening stands as a kind of warning to potential readers not to venture further unless immersed in feminist ideology and subjected to years of higher education at politically correct universities.

The surprising truth, however, is that anyone interested in how modern women view abortion and who perseveres in reading *Speaking of Abortion* will be richly rewarded. Despite the clear bias of the authors and the difficulty in adjusting to feminist jargon, this book offers substantive insights into the abortion debate in America. In fact, for pro-lifers interested in understanding women of different socioeconomic backgrounds, it should be required reading.

AUTHORS Andrea Press and Elizabeth Cole began with a worthy objective, namely, to speak with a broad spectrum of women on both sides of the abortion issue, in the nonthreatening environment of their own homes, to learn how women react to television depictions of the abortion issue. The authors sought women who were not activists, correctly perceiving that activists are not representative of ordinary women.

They conducted a total of 108 interviews over four years, among thirty-four discussion groups. Each group viewed three television depictions of abortion, from episodes of *Cagney and Lacey* (1985) and *Dallas* (1985), and from the TV movie *Roe v. Wade* (1989). Afterwards, the participants discussed what they saw and felt while the authors took turns asking questions and observing the discussion.

Press and Cole are self-professed pro-choice feminists, who admit that the liberal abortion view has been "disseminated virtually without challenge" in the mass media. Yet they are postmodern and class-conscious enough to imagine that not all women of all socioeconomic classes see abortion the way activists (mostly educated, upper-middle-class women) do. They make an interesting distinction among self-identified pro-choice women, between those who are middle class, those who are working class, and those who are working class but identify with middle-class women and values. While the limitations of the methodology could be discussed at length, the responses gathered still offer extremely useful information for anyone trying to persuade women to become pro-life.

The pro-choice working-class women who identify with their own class have adopted their pro-choice stand not as a matter of principle but as a strategy for survival. The women interviewed here "did not personally condone abortion; however, they were reluctant to invoke social authority to prohibit it. . . . They feared legal restrictions on abortion not because such laws would in principle abridge fundamental rights of women, but because they were convinced the laws would be prejudicially enforced." The women in this group did not trust the medical, judicial, or political systems.

Nor did they accept television's portrayal of the working class. Respondents were sharply critical of the "helpless victim" image of the poor women who resort to abortion on the shows they watched. They also rejected the idea that financial hardship justifies abortion and the presumption that working-class women desire membership in the middle class, with abortion a necessary means of advancement.

These are important insights. The pro-choice portrayals of abortion on television have not impressed these women, nor have the arguments from first principles of either the pro-life or pro-choice movements. Logic, abstract principles, legislative and political campaigns, condescending compassion—these do not resonate. There is instead a fundamental "us against them" dynamic at work here that pro-lifers need to understand. These women are open to seeing abortion as a tool of manipulation by those in power. After all, the strongest forces in favor of the right to abortion are also the ones this group deeply mistrusts.

To date the pro-life community has not convinced this group that it shares their interests, even though pro-lifers too are "outsiders." The authors found "distrust and even bitterness" towards members of the pro-life movement who promote keeping the baby without fully understanding the pressures on these women and their felt needs. Pro-lifers are seen as one more

TRADITIONAL ANGLICANS/EPISCOPALIANS

Get *all* the news of interest to you—about the U.S. Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion at large as well as the Continuing Church internationally—from the publication that has been chronicling the traditional Anglican movement for 33 years—THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE. For the full picture of the Anglican world today—balanced and uncensored in an independent magazine published nine times yearly—send $22 for U.S. readers, $25 in Canada and $30 elsewhere, with your name and address, to:

The Christian Challenge®

The Only Worldwide Voice of Traditional Anglicanism
Founded 1962
1215 Independence Ave. S.E., Dept. F
Washington, DC 20003

Checks in U.S., British or Canadian currency are accepted, along with Visa or MasterCard charge orders.

Phone: (202) 547-5409 • Fax: (202) 543-8704
E-mail:CHRISTIAN.CHALLENGE@ecunet.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upper-middle-class group with an agenda to promote.

The other group of working-class pro-choice women, those who identify more with the middle class, are another story entirely. These respondents took pains to distance themselves from the irresponsible members of their own working class, those who are sexually reckless, on drugs, dependent on the welfare system, and so on. The priorities of this "upwardly mobile" group center on hard work, responsibility, and respectability.

For them, abortion is acceptable in the abstract as a last resort in serious cases. On the other hand, they feel it is too readily available and too frequently abused in today's society. While they support abortion as a right for someone else, they firmly reject it for themselves or other "responsible" people. This is a completely different mindset from the other group, yet neither group of working-class women considers abortion fundamental to its way of life or even its own set of core values.

It is not until we reach the "middle-class pro-choice" category that we find the familiar feminist opinion, which the authors characterize as the belief that

> only an individual woman's feeling—indeed her own anguish—can determine whether abortion would be right or wrong in her case. This is an extremely subjective logic. . . . It argues that the decision in each case must depend on factors that those not directly involved have no means to assess. . . . Since no one can really know what someone else is going through, no one can make a valid abortion decision for another.

Many of these women still maintain that abortion is wrong, and, like the upwardly mobile working-class women, they flatly reject abortion for themselves. But they nonetheless defend vehemently the freedom to choose abortion. These women view abortion as something for less fortunate others who need compassion and support, not moral judgment and legislative persecution.

Cole and Press do not take an uncritical view of this "mainstream" position. They even suggest that there is a "fault line in the logic of legitimization underlying the pro-choice movement in the United States," located in the clash between abstract principle and its concrete application. Pro-choice women will say that no one can decide for another about an abortion, yet they categorically reject abortion for themselves and condemn abuses they see in particular decisions to abort. Abortion rights rhetoric proposes a radical libertarianism that the women themselves are not willing to accept.

In summary, none of these pro-choice categories show women at ease with abortion, suggesting that with proper positioning and careful presentation, the pro-life view might make substantial inroads among them all.

It is interesting to note that the conventional "pro-life vs. pro-choice" labels do not adequately represent any group of women in this study. Across all categories the authors found that "the legality of the procedure was of only secondary concern. . . . Instead, the suitability of particular abortion decisions was primary in their thinking." This suggests that the pro-life

Selections for the discerning reader from Mercer University Press

Jesus Christ in History and Scripture
by Edgar V. McKnight
$40.00 cloth
0-86554-653-3
$20.00 paper
0-86554-677-0

Jesus Christ in History and Scripture addresses the current revolution in Jesus Studies by highlighting the influence critics have had over the quest for absolute certainty and exploring the possibilities for creative reading of the Jesus stories.

Nonviolence for the Third Millenium
edited by Simon Harak, S. J.
$22.00
0-86554-660-6
Available in January; advance orders welcome

Nonviolence for the Third Millennium asks the question: "Where can the legacy of Gandhi and Martin Luther King lead us into the next thousand years?" Both academics and activists offer their thoughts on the future of nonviolence as a strategy for social change.

Freedom and Limit: A Dialogue between Literature and Christian Doctrine
by Paul Fiddes
$18.00 0-86554-649-5

Theologians draw limits and create definitions, while those who write poetry, novels, and plays use their imaginations to probe beyond limits and challenge definitions. In **Freedom and Limit**, Paul Fiddes argues that these processes--imagination and revelation--are intrinsically connected.

To order, please call 1-800-637-2378, or explore our online catalog at www.mupress.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cause, by identifying with legislative or political change, is missing the personal side of the issue that women find most compelling, and is thereby losing the potential to influence their views most effectively.

This emphasis on the individual context in which abortion decisions are made has been a key to the pro-abortion strategy all along because pro-choicers realize that, for vulnerable women in our modern culture, anecdote trumps abstraction, and individual differences trump principle. Focusing on real life stories that target the specific circumstances in which women in different socioeconomic categories feel uncomfortable with abortion is a strategy that might significantly advance the pro-life cause. With this in mind, *Speaking of Abortion* could prove to be a valuable resource to pro-lifers engaged in the battle of persuasion.

Waiting for Jeremiah

RELIGIOUS READING: THE PLACE OF READING IN THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION. By PAUL J. GRIFFITHS. *Oxford University Press. 210 pp. $35.*

***Reviewed by* R. R. Reno**

PAUL J. GRIFFITHS has written a strange book about reading, a book oddly against itself. *Religious Reading* is a book written in the prevailing scholarly style, but is polemically opposed to prevailing habits of reading. It is an academic book against academia, a book encouraging us to read in a certain way—religiously—but a book that does not invite a religious reading of itself. It is a book written to inform us about a significant religious practice, to educate us about the kind of reading constitutive of a religious life, but also to convert us, to induce repentance and amendment of life.

The academic side of *Religious Reading* is straightforward and convincing. Against those who see religion as based in emotion or some other non-cognitivist faculty, Griffiths defines religion as a "comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central *account*" (emphasis added). A religious account does not simply emerge out of the primal sludge of consciousness, nor does such an account come automatically as an undifferentiated part of cultural socialization. For Griffiths, a religious account requires intentional activity. Just as we need to learn mathematics and to cultivate habits of abstraction and observation in order to understand the account of matter and energy given by physics, so we must acquire certain skills and intellectual habits in order to give a religious account. "Unless we are placed in a social and institutional context in which certain pedagogical practices are in place," Griffiths observes, "we shall not, because we cannot, become religious: we shall not learn to offer a religious account."

Given the contingency of religious accounts and their dependence upon very particular cultural practices, a scholar of religion must attend to the pedagogy, as well as the content, of religious accounts. We should know *how* a religious account is preserved and transmitted, as well as *what* that account teaches. The practices that nurture and sustain religious accounts are many. Ritual trains us in certain ways; ascetic discipline shapes and molds; prayer sharpens and intensifies. However, in keeping with his emphasis on the cognitive dimension of religious accounts, Griffiths emphasizes what he calls "religious reading,"

R. R. RENO *teaches at Creighton University and is currently a Resident Member of the Princeton-based Center of Theological Inquiry.*

Fannie Crosby ■ Isaac Watts ■ Johann Sebastian Bach ■ Charles Wesley ■ Bernard of Clairvaux ■ Thomas Ken ■ John Newton ■ Martin Luther ■ Wil Thompson ■ Lewis Jones ■ John Wesley ■ Thomas Shepherd ■ William Cowper ■ Oswald Smith ■ Francis Assisi ■ Frederick Faber ■ Samuel Medley ■ Edward Perronet ■ Frances Havergal ■ Reginald Heber ■ G. F. Handel ■ Franz Joseph Haydn ■ Robert Robinson ■ William Williams ■ Samuel Stennett ■ Augustus Montague Toplady ■ John Fawcett ■ John Cennick ■ Catherine Hankey

Hymnody in American Protestantism Conference

May 17-20, 2000

Hymns help shape the adoration, faith, longings and hope of American Christians. The ISAE's conference on Hymnody in American Protestantism will explore what hymns reveal about the larger story of American Protestant history, life, and culture. Over forty scholars will present the results of their research on the theology, themes, and imagery of popular hymns; the development and "careers" of particular hymns; and, the role of hymns in various ethnic, regional, and denominational settings. The conference will feature a variety of plenary, concurrent, and panel sessions, as well as three evening *Hymnfests.*

For more information, contact:

Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals
Wheaton College • Wheaton, IL 60187
(630) 752-5437 • isae@wheaton.edu

See the conference website at: www.wheaton.edu/isae.

Funded by the generous support of the Lilly Foundation, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the role played by literary works as read and heard, memorized and recited, in developing an ability to give a religious account.

Griffiths' analysis of religious reading is subtle and wide-ranging, but characteristic emphases emerge. First, the literary works that embody and promote religious accounts are received by the religious reader as "a stable and vastly rich resource." They merit continued reading and rereading. Indeed, for Griffiths, the key element of religious reading is memorization. Analyzing the orthography of ancient texts, methods of citation, and the technology of writing, Griffiths makes a strong case for the central role of memory and recitation in first millennium Buddhist, and to a lesser extent, ancient Christian, religious reading.

For Griffiths, this emphasis on memory is not just a consequence of the constraints of limited literacy and the expense of producing written texts in premodern societies. The intentional act of committing literary works to memory, either in complete form for communal recitation, or in bits and pieces for immediate reference, signals the seriousness of religious reading. Memory and recitation are the engines of religious habituation; they constitute a profound act of submission to received teaching and they help internalize and intensify the religious account. Such practice brings the word near, and as St. Paul says, puts it in our hearts and on our lips.

No doubt scholars will dispute Griffiths' strong emphasis on reading, and the consequent priority he gives to the cognitive dimension of religion. Structuralists such as Levi-Strauss treat religions as systems that order the universe at a more primitive level. Studies of the sort advanced by René Girard assume an underlying mythopoetic dynamic that gives social potency to ritual. Scholarly descendants of Rudolph Otto investigate the experiential basis for religious symbols.

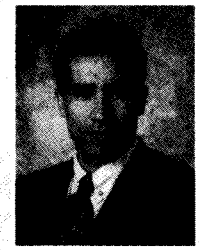
But Griffiths did not write *Religious Reading* in order to demonstrate a thesis for the benefit of scholars of religion. Quite the contrary, *Religious Reading* is written against scholars of religion, against the gaze of objectivity. For Griffiths does not wish to write about religious reading; he wants to write in favor of a "tensile attentiveness that wishes to linger, to prolong, to savor." In short, Griffiths seeks to defend religious reading—not as a thesis about how religion functions, but as a living practice.

Here, the polemical side of *Religious Reading* emerges. The contemporary academy, the author claims, is awash with a pedagogical practice invested in "consumerist reading." Griffiths writes in the spirit of resistance against "the processes of production and consumption that now dominate almost every department of life in late capitalist cultures like ours." Just what Griffiths means by "consumerist reading," and how it relates to "late" or "global" capitalism, is obscure, but he is very clear that whatever consumerist reading might be, it is a very bad thing.

Consumerist reading evokes disposable diapers, brand names, chain stores. It is an approach to reading that treats literary works as means to some other end, as purveyors of information that can be discarded once the exams are taken, the problems solved. Consumerist reading seeks entertainment and titillation, and should a literary work fail to command immediate attention, the consumerist reader moves on and picks up another book, switches to another channel. According to Griffiths, this habit of reading is a "widespread tendency, especially evident among professional readers in Western institutions of higher education." Scholars treat books as resources for citations, as occasions to display theoretical virtuosity, as raw material for the production of their own books. Scholars are little more than pawns of "something else," and that something is, you guessed it, "global capitalism."

Because the passion of *Religious Reading* rests in the antithesis Griffiths draws between consumerist reading and religious reading, he needs to do more than denounce. He cannot simply characterize consumerist reading with innuendo ("the juggernaut of McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken"). He needs to employ some-

Defending the Christian worldview



In a world that embraces relativism, religious pluralism and materialism, our approach to apologetics must include a defense of what our faith entails as it touches on politics, ethics, law, philosophy and culture. Trinity's MA in Faith & Culture does just that. In the tradition of St. Paul, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer, the MA in Faith & Culture integrates apologetics, political theory, social philosophy, human rights, public policy and applied ethics to defend the Christian worldview.

Francis J. Beckwith, Ph.D.
associate professor, TGS

Take courses this spring aimed at defending the Christian worldview with experts such as William Dembski, Ph.D. and Gary Habermas, Ph.D.

Trinity Graduate School
California Campus
800.395.0499
www.TLS.edu

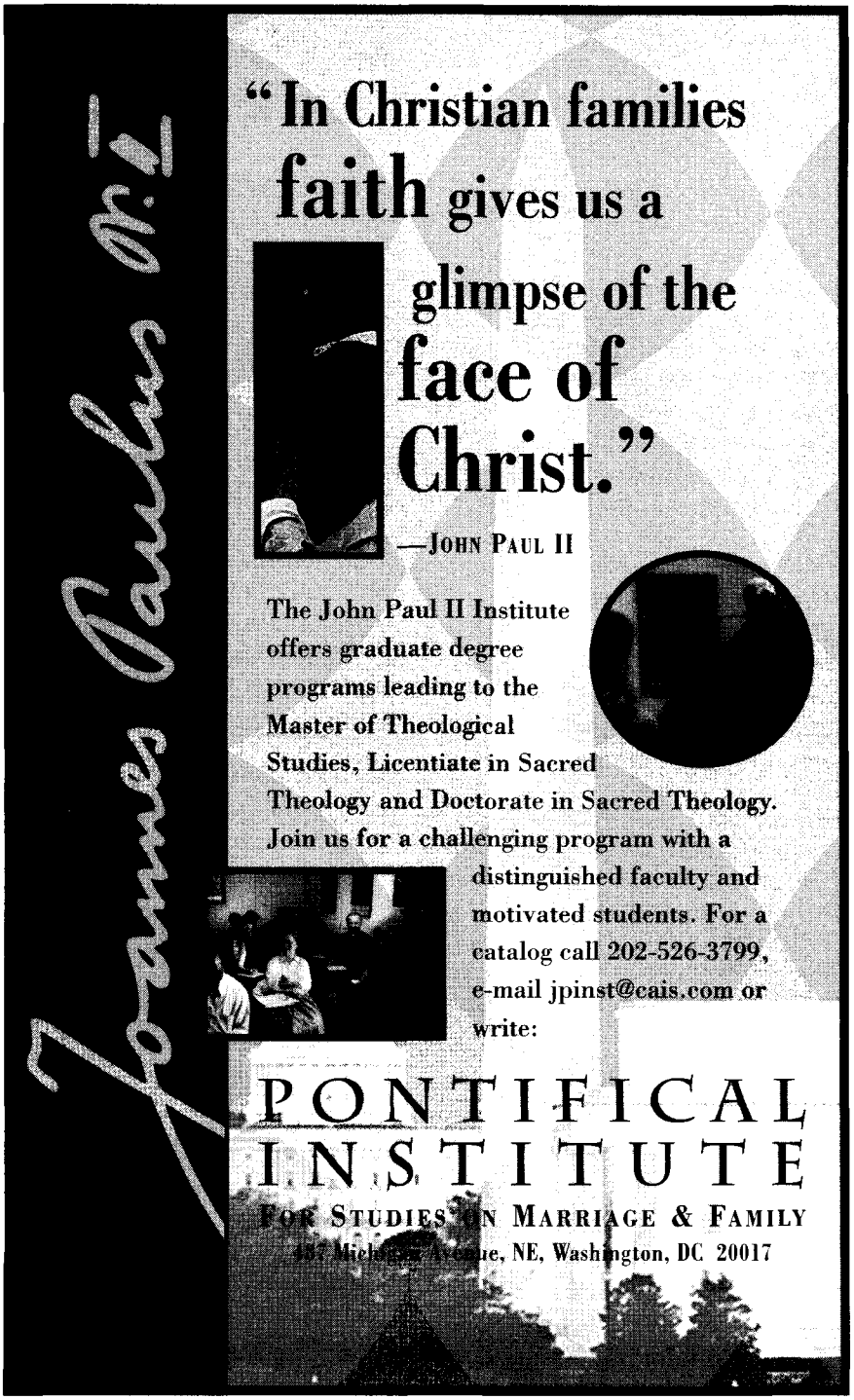
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing like the care he displays in analyzing religious reading when he describes the pedagogy and habits of reading that dominate academic study.

In the first place, for all the violence of Griffiths' opposition to consumerist reading, his own use of Buddhist and Christian texts seems rather like that of any other scholar of comparative religion. He does not read the *Sutrasamucaya* (Anthology of Sacred Works) religiously. He deploys the text in a scholarly fashion, establishing authorship, analyzing the orthography, counting the length and frequency of quotations, speculating about the *Sitz im Leben* of its composition and recitation. The same holds true for his treatment of Christian anthologies and commentaries. He uses Augustine's *Speculum de scriptura sacra* in order to buttress and advance his theory of religious reading; he does not read Augustine religiously, at least not here.

These scholarly uses of religious texts are illuminating, and help Griffiths' reader see more clearly what religious reading entails. But they are scholarly uses of religious texts nonetheless. And if Griffiths insists upon painting academic approaches with the broad brush of "consumerist reading," then one cannot help but wonder. Griffiths expresses horror at the "damage done by university scholars to religious readers," a damage "not only great and inexcusable, but also dishonest—this last because it pretends benevolence and respect while bringing only manipulation and destruction." In a fevered pitch he proclaims that "Indologists and anthropologists have done more to destroy traditional Sanskrit learning than ever Christian missionaries could." Well, perhaps, but in what sense does *Religious Reading* proceed differently? Tu quoque is an informal fallacy and does nothing to settle the truth of a matter, but it does have the advantage of encouraging a degree of consistency in what one affirms and denounces.

The second reason Griffiths needs to move beyond labels and throwaway lines in condemning consumerist reading is that his intuitions about the modern academy are surely right. Very little piety remains in the university, not only in the limited sense of religious faith, but in the broad sense of cultivated submission to traditions of inquiry, devotion to literary works, and sheer love of truth for its own sake. Griffiths tosses off glib diagnoses: global capitalism is the root of all evil, mention supplants use, the objectifying gaze corrupts the embrace of commitment. These characterizations might garner applause from a sympathetic audience, but they do little to uncover and demystify current


Joannes Paulus PP. II
"In Christian families faith gives us a glimpse of the face of Christ."
—John Paul II
The John Paul II Institute offers graduate degree programs leading to the Master of Theological Studies, Licentiate in Sacred Theology and Doctorate in Sacred Theology. Join us for a challenging program with a distinguished faculty and motivated students. For a catalog call 202-526-3799, e-mail jpinst@cais.com or write:
PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE
For Studies on Marriage & Family
487 Michigan Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20017

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So...You're Intolerant !

Well, so was He.

Jesus more than "offended" the moneychangers; He "intolerantly" threw them out of the Temple. He said "mean-spirited" and "hurtful" things to people — *hypocrites, brood of vipers, sons of Hell*, etc. He was more than "insensitive" to unrepentant sinners; He warned that Heaven would not be "inclusive" of them.

The war between good and evil is not just between the Church and the World; it's being waged inside the churches, where the voices of iniquity have found a booming echo. Those voices speak beguilingly of "tolerance" and "diversity": Premarital sex? "Why, kids can't help it." Abortion? "Women must be free to choose." Homosexuality? "Diverse strokes for diverse folks." Porn? "Lighten up." Adultery? "Be understanding." Assisted suicide? "Be compassionate." Moneychangers in the Temple? "Hey, people need to make a living."

But the forces of libertinism don't just want to be tolerated; they're now demanding and getting approval. If you don't go along with the crowd, *you* won't be tolerated. You will nonjudgmentally be judged to be "intolerant" — and banished to Outer Darkness to wail and gnash your teeth. This is what's happening in many Christian churches today. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, an orthodox Catholic monthly magazine, refuse to throw Christ out of the Temple. If you're willing to stand up for Jesus in the face of accusation — or if you need your backbone stiffened — subscribe today!

(Please allow 2 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue.)

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES FOR FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

- ☐ One-year subscription ..... $14 (regularly $19)
- ☐ One-year student, unemployed, or retired person's subscription ..... $12 (regularly $16)
- ☐ Two-year subscription ..... $23 (regularly $35)
- ☐ One-year non-U.S. subscription ..... US$24 (regularly $29) Payment must be drawn in U.S. Dollars.
- ☐ Sample copy $3.50

➔ Our prices are *so low* because you can't pay by credit card and payment must accompany order. Send letter or this coupon with check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Mail to:

NEW OXFORD REVIEW
Room 991
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley CA 94706

NAME (Please print or type)

STREET ADDRESS OR P.O. BOX

CITY STATE ZIP

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

habits of mind that dominate the academy. Griffiths needs to apply his cool intellect as much to the world of consumerist reading that he dislikes as to the ancient world of religious reading that he commends. Only then can he make progress toward achieving his goal of recovering religious reading within the ambit of the academy.

THAT RECOVERY REQUIRES some hard thinking. Philip Rieff, one of the greatest sociological minds of this century, has thought of little else over the last three decades, tortured by the difficulty of recovering a "pedagogy of interdiction," an atmosphere of learning in which submission and obedience have a role. Our academic culture of critique seems to make such a recovery impossible, he now seems to believe. Leo Strauss is another student of modernity who saw into the void, and he devoted a great deal of energy and attention to the development of a counter-pedagogy, a counter-practice of reading. His student Allan Bloom found himself sufficiently removed from the prevailing sensibilities of today's academic culture to write a devastating critique. Less oracular and hermetic, Robert Bellah and Robert Coles resist the dehumanizing gaze of social science, arguing that people and their stories matter. Jon Levenson seeks strategies of resistance against what is surely the *Urfeind* of religious reading—the historical-critical approach to the Bible. Each of these scholars wishes to escape from the destructive banality of what passes for intellectual sophistication, but none is satisfied with the mere rhetoric of "consumerist reading" and the easy explanation of "global capitalism."

Griffiths reports in his conclusion, "This book has been (always implicitly and sometimes explicitly) a jeremiad against the pedagogical practices and reading practices of the academy, and more especially against the attitudes and techniques of professional scholars of religion." In intent, perhaps, but not in consequence. Griffiths has performed as a scholar of religion; he has shown very well how premodern Buddhists and Christians understood the role of reading in the acquisition, preservation, and extension of religious accounts. But as a Jeremiah, he has neither uncovered our self-deception, laying bare our waywardness, nor has he made clear the path toward faithfulness. I hope that in his next book, he does. For we need the guidance.

BRIEFLY NOTED

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY AS PROMISE AND PROJECT: REFLECTIONS IN A JESUIT IDIOM. By MICHAEL J. BUCKLEY, S.J. *Georgetown University Press. 224 pp. $55 cloth, $22.95 paper.*

Michael Buckley, chronicler and critic of Western religious culture, ranks with fellow Jesuit Walter Ong, the esteemed interpreter of literary sensibilities. His decisive work, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism*, does not delimit his interests. Published here are three decades of elegant essays on the classical and Catholic educational traditions wherein he studies the Jesuit educational venture from its Medieval and Renaissance antecedents through its Baroque foundations, down to the recent turmoil over political consciousness (which produced the energetic command that social, political, and economic justice be a conscious motif in all Jesuit education) and the claim to autocephaly (the still unresolved determination of Jesuit and other universities not to be answerable to the Church for their Catholic authenticity). Were it not for his gifts as *raconteur*, Buckley's versatile anecdotal sorties from Pico della Mirandola to Rudolf Carnap, from Juan Luis Vives to Alfred North Whitehead, from Aulus Gellius to Paul Kristeller, might seem precious. But he holds fast to his theme: that a sound education must be the work of a moral community. His inspired indictment, in the spirit of Rabelais and Erasmus, of modern universities that forgo this moral calling is as powerful as this reviewer has seen. What makes the book both awkward and fascinating, however, is Buckley's conviction that those who make Catholic universities need not be party to the Catholic tradition, or to the communion of faith which created and grooms that tradition. While there should be "a serious presence" of Catholic intellectuals on the faculty, a decent diversity also mandates plenty of colleagues who do not share that faith. When he comes to describe how the fellow travelers fit in, the prose develops a vapor lock. "They should find in the Catholic university a support for the religious and human values they represent . . . whatever is human enters with peculiar efficacy into the concerns of the Church, which adds its own sense of religious urgency to those values that engage all human desire and longing." Buckley is humming Terence to us: *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto* ("Since I am human, I reckon nothing human foreign"). He may not notice that comity of this sort comes only by reducing ourselves to our most generic identity. Put into practice, the vague Jesuit educational policy of "Hiring for Mission" has devolved into a willingness to appoint otherwise qualified people who want the job but would not find these essays, however elegant, interesting. For them to be at home on a Jesuit campus requires a host population whose faith and convictions have been drained of every characteristically Catholic inclination to criticize the public civilization in which their guests were formed. One might expect this would produce universities of increasingly dilute culture, but Buckley does not for a moment think so. He praises "universities which are Catholic in their faith and catholic in their pluralism. . . . Does the Catholic rule out the catholic?" I fear that Father Buckley—along with many others—does not yet perceive that no wholesome moral community will season the general wel-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fare except by fidelity to its own specific convictions. For generic catholics, like rice Christians, secular Jews, prophets on the royal payroll, and established churches, become like salt without savor and butter left uncovered in the refrigerator.

—*James Tunstead Burtchaell, C.S.C.*

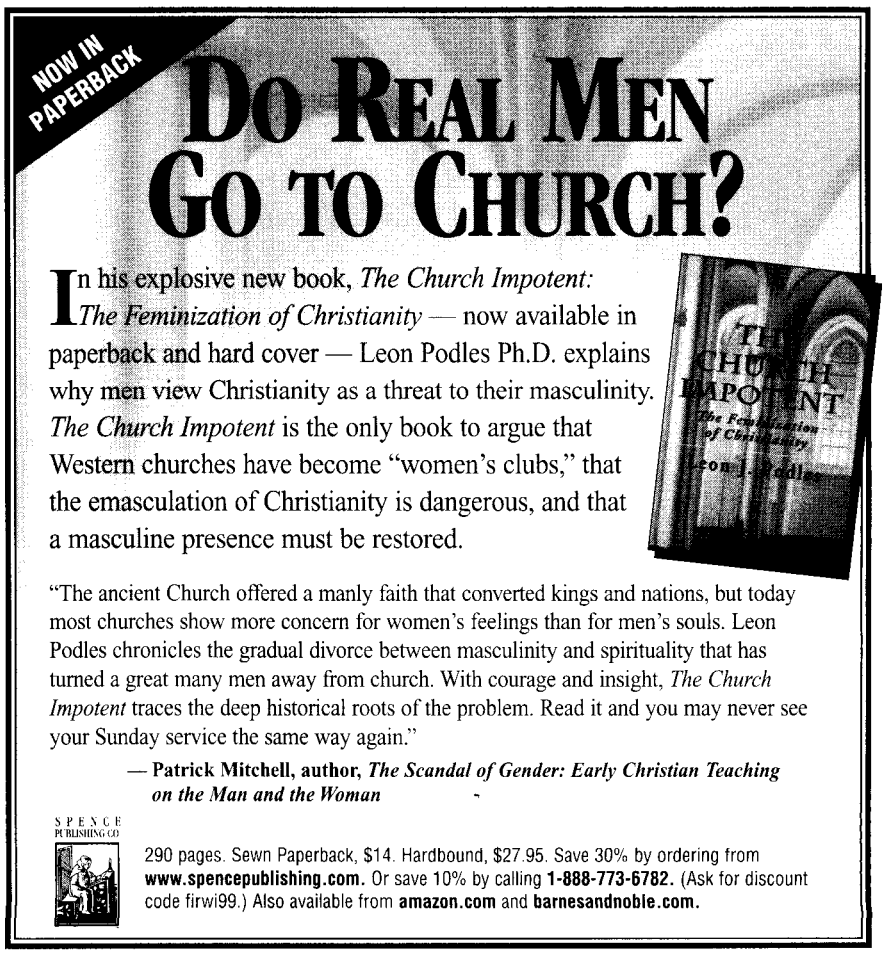
Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi. By Gordon P. Hugenberger. *Baker. 434 pp. paper.*

Gordon P. Hugenberger makes a compelling case for the position suggested in his title, *Marriage as a Covenant.* He takes up a hotly debated text near the end of the Old Testament which clearly identifies marriage as a covenantal form—Malachi 2:10-16. Hugenberger has mastered the historical-critical materials and is appreciative of the doctrinal traditions of biblical scholarship. He is also alert to the fact that the Hebrew for covenant, *berith,* has been variously translated as marital "bond" (German) and "contract" (French), as well as *mysterion* in some Greek texts, which became *sacramentum* (and, sometimes, *foedus, pactum,* or *compactum*) in Latin—a matter that makes clarity of definition necessary. Hugenberger takes the basic definitions of covenant and its possible applications to marriage with great seriousness, and sorts out the linguistic, liturgical, and social-historical implications of the term with care. He then turns to the investigation of how the term works in Scripture not only in reference to marriage but also with regard to divorce, polygyny, and the various uses of the creational images of Adam and Eve. From this deep analysis of a single text, with all its representation of other moral assumptions, echoes of previous biblical tradition, and anticipations of later New Testament uses, he argues convincingly for a normative position that can be found throughout Scripture. He sees a stability in the biblical-ethical view of marriage as covenant that is more enduring than a purely historical analysis can recognize, and more adaptive to the nuances of human dynamics than a purely dogmatic approach allows. A covenant of marriage involves a monogamous, heterosexual, life-long loving and just relationship open to procreation, one that will seek to obey the laws and purposes of God, nurture the next generation, and care with compassionate and restorative forgiveness for those who contritely seek to find their way when and if some dimension of covenantal responsibility is broken. His scholarship as a faculty member of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary would seem to aid the demands he faces as senior pastor at the historic Park Street Congregational Church in central Boston. (*Marriage as a Covenant* was originally published in 1994 by E. J. Brill; the current North American edition is part of Baker's Biblical Studies Library.)

—*Max L. Stackhouse*

Sexual Orientation and Human Rights in American Religious Discourse. Edited by Saul M. Olyan and Martha C. Nussbaum. *Oxford University Press. 260 pp. $29.95.*

The editors of this volume write that "sexual orientation has become a contested issue of great prominence, *the* issue of the nineties according to some." To "some" it surely is; most of us place it in the top trio of domestic issues, along with abortion and school choice. Like the latter two issues, sexual orientation (read: homosexuality) is an issue of great concern to religious believers. For that reason the editors fear that "reasoned debate"—particularly when it comes to legal recognition


NOW IN PAPERBACK
DO REAL MEN GO TO CHURCH?
In his explosive new book, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity* — now available in paperback and hard cover — Leon Podles Ph.D. explains why men view Christianity as a threat to their masculinity. *The Church Impotent* is the only book to argue that Western churches have become "women's clubs," that the emasculation of Christianity is dangerous, and that a masculine presence must be restored.
"The ancient Church offered a manly faith that converted kings and nations, but today most churches show more concern for women's feelings than for men's souls. Leon Podles chronicles the gradual divorce between masculinity and spirituality that has turned a great many men away from church. With courage and insight, *The Church Impotent* traces the deep historical roots of the problem. Read it and you may never see your Sunday service the same way again."
— Patrick Mitchell, author, *The Scandal of Gender: Early Christian Teaching on the Man and the Woman*
SPENCE PUBLISHING CO
290 pages. Sewn Paperback, $14. Hardbound, $27.95. Save 30% by ordering from www.spencepublishing.com. Or save 10% by calling 1-888-773-6782. (Ask for discount code firwi99.) Also available from amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

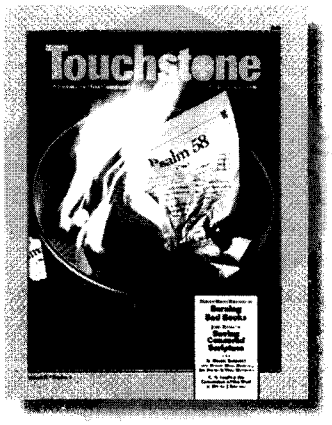
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of same-sex relationships as marriages—is a scarce commodity. Their stated aim is not to resolve this or any other public policy question, but to demonstrate the possibility of "reasoned debate" by religiously committed scholars. Thus are brought together essays by representatives of four religious communities: from Judaism, Roman Catholicism, mainline Protestantism, and the African-American churches. ("Fundamentalists" and Muslims are excluded because there has been "little or no open debate" within those communities.) The essays, never hysterical or overly polemical, are uneven, as one might expect from a collection ranging from David Novak to Charles Curran. But finally the book is meant to demonstrate not so much "reasoned debate" as the fact of disagreement among reasonable people within America's religious communities. If the godly cannot agree among themselves, the editors seem to be saying, how possibly could our pluralistic polity? Once again, that which is reasonable has been subtly equated with that which is liberal.

— Gerard V. Bradley

THE SPLENDOR OF FAITH: THE THEOLOGICAL VISION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II. By AVERY DULLES, S.J. *Herder & Herder. 204 pp. $19.95 paper.*

The book started out with a course Father Dulles taught at St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, New York. The fourteen chapters in their present and fuller form would be a severe penance for seminarian auditors, for they are very tightly packed indeed. But, as a succinct summary of the "theological vision" of John Paul II, this book, reflecting an astonishing command of the texts of an astonishingly prolific Pope, is indispensable. Everything is here: Christology, the evangelization of culture, world missions, Christian unity, eschatology, a Christian understanding of world religions, the theological basis of human rights, and much more. Although John Paul's responsibilities as bishop and Pope curtailed his strictly academic endeavors, Dulles makes a strong case that academic theologians must take him very seriously as a theologian. Giving due attention to the personalist and phenomenological distinctives of John Paul's thought, Dulles emphasizes the continuity with the Second Vatican Council and his predecessors John XXIII and, especially, Paul VI. A notable contribution of the book is its demonstration of how thoroughly the present Pope is "a man of the Council." John Paul's pastoral and intellectual articulation of the Christian faith,



Criticism

"If you want two hours of excitement with a bit of steamy sex thrown in with a certain shallow level of interpersonal moralizing, go see *The English Patient.* If you want to lengthen the experience to three hours, go see *Titanic.*"

Patrick Henry Reardon
Volume 11, Number 2, Page 12, Paragraph 5

Just one of the many things you'll find in....

Touchstone
A JOURNAL OF MERE CHRISTIANITY

Touchstone
A JOURNAL OF MERE CHRISTIANITY
Subscription Dept. ▪ P.O. Box 3000
Denville, NJ 07834

Enclosed is my payment of $19.95 for one year (6 issues) of *Touchstone*. If I am not satisfied with the first issue, I may cancel within 30 days and receive a full refund.

Check enclosed (make payable to Touchstone*)*
Bill my Mastercard, Visa, or American Express (circle one)

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
_____
CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____

Card # _____ Expires ____
Signature _____

or call our subscription service at: 1-800-783-4903

6FT910

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dulles writes, is "serene and balanced," and the same can be said of *The Splendor of Faith.* Dulles' synthesis is a splendid achievement and is warmly recommended to all who would understand the mind of the premier witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in our time.

Truth and the Reality of God: An Essay in Natural Theology. By Ian Markham. *T&T Clark. 145 pp. $37.95.*

In this concise and eminently readable essay, Ian Markham gives natural theology a new lease on life and a new claim on the attention of contemporary theologians and philosophers. Speaking to the usual protests against the discipline, he explains: "The tradition of natural theology should not be viewed as an exercise in seeking arguments to persuade the nonexistent 'tradition-less' person. Instead its role is to tease out the explanatory power of the Christian tradition. This is not done outside the tradition, but within the tradition. Yet it can be compelling for people outside the tradition, because the proofs illustrate the incomplete nature of their own tradition." Thus armed with natural theology, Markham seeks to stake out and defend the proposition that belief in truth necessarily implies belief in God, invoking both Aquinas and Nietzsche to make his point. It would take extraordinary effort not to be impressed by Markham's cogent argument.

Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death. By Richard Marius. *Harvard University Press. 542 pp. $35.*

This is an odd book to be published by a prestige university press, since it is less a scholarly study than a largely imaginative account of Luther in the service of Marius' belief that the modern world has made obsolete the fundamentalisms of the past. As with Marius' first Luther book in 1974 and his 1984 book on Thomas More, Erasmus, portrayed as a modern secularist, is the hero. In the present book, Luther is a fundamentalist who has lost his faith and, as a consequence, lashes out in fury against his opponents. Marius has written elsewhere about his liberation from his own fundamentalist background. His subsequent writings would seem to reflect what our Editor-in-Chief has called "the narrow escape syndrome," meaning the desperation of those who fear that they might somehow be sucked back into an oppressive belief system from which they thought they had escaped. *Martin Luther* tells us a great deal about Richard Marius and very little that is reliable about Martin Luther.

SAINT LOUIS ABBEY

A Benedictine monastery of Catholic priests and brothers

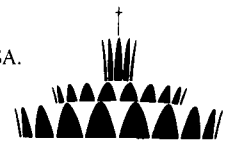
We seek men who would like to join us in exploring the mystery of God in prayer; in living a common life; and in participating in our apostolates of teaching at Saint Louis Priory School, pastoral work in Saint Anselm's Parish, and other important ministries.

Look into our world, and learn more about our Benedictine way of life by visiting our new web site:

http://www.stlouisabbey.org

or contact Fr. Ralph Wright, OSB, Saint Louis Abbey,
500 South Mason Road, Saint Louis, Missouri 63141, USA.

Tel: 1-800-638-1527 or 1-314-434-5774
Fax: 1-314-576-7363 E-mail: fr_ralph@priory.org



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

The Future of Once Protestant Britain

The British media let it all hang out for the funeral of Basil Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster. But then, as we learned from the lachrymose sensationalism surrounding Princess Di's death, something dreadfully embarrassing seems to have happened to the nation of the famously stiff upper lip. In any event, Niall Ferguson, the noted Oxford historian, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, complains that at the time of the cardinal's funeral last June "a visitor from, say, Poland might have been forgiven for thinking he was in another Roman Catholic country." Part of the problem, as he sees it, is that there are so many committed Catholics in Fleet Street. He allows that there are a lot of Jews and atheists, too, but the depressing thing "is how few committed Protestants there seem to be." If there were more Protestants, Ferguson opines, so much attention lavished on a cardinal's funeral "would have elicited a certain amount of bristling." Ferguson misses the bristling.

And it's not only Fleet Street. Catholics, he notes, were 5.9 percent of the population of the United Kingdom in 1900 and are now 9.8 percent. "That Britain has become one-tenth Catholic is a remarkable historical phenomenon. But more remarkable is that it is so much less Protestant than it used to be." Ferguson chiefly blames Protestants for the change he so dislikes. Their clergy have made so many accommodations in doctrine, liturgy, and morals that "most have resignedly accepted their role as the organizers of ill-attended sing-songs. By comparison, the Catholic Church has achieved a clever and successful makeover: not only united where the Protestants are divided, but also solemn where they tend to be silly, and socially conservative where they tend to be trendy." It used to be that people associated Catholicism with "Irish backwardness; it was Bogside, not Brideshead." The change started with Newman, who gave Catholicism "some intellectual respectability," and was exemplified by the upper-class and eminently proper Cardinal Hume.

But the fact remains, says Ferguson, that Catholicism is obscurantist and reactionary. For example, "Is it really sensible that a senescent Polish bachelor should have the last word on the reproductive rate of hundreds of millions of women?" The "link between Catholicism and stagnation does seem suspiciously close. No doubt, as the life of Basil Hume well illustrated, Catholicism does more good than harm in a developed society like ours. But I for one would not fancy the chances of a Catholic Britain in the twenty-first century." When it comes to bristling, what Fleet Street may lack Oxford seems ready to supply in abundance.

Cardinal Hume was, by almost unanimous agreement, a charmingly self-effacing and amiable man. Among some in this country, as well as in the UK and Rome, he was thought to be orthodox, although not assertively so. He had that British air of somewhat amused tolerance toward the American cousins. In an interview with the ultramundane *National Catholic Reporter*, he reflected on his American encounters. "It came across to me very strongly that there was this fearful side to [the U.S. bishops]. That, I think, frustrates some of their theologians. You see, we're different over here. We have a minority church. We're not important worldwide. We can get on with our own jobs. It's a different situation." In the same interview, he reportedly expressed puzzlement about Cardinals Bernard Law and James Hickey in the U.S. who took public issue with the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin's Common Ground Initiative. "I was a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

good friend of Joe's," said Hume. "I had stayed with him in Chicago. I couldn't understand that."

Cardinal Hume was, as the British say, a wet, and it may be that his accommodating manner was what was needed for the last two decades of the quiet insinuation of Catholicism as the largest (in terms of actual practice) communion in Britain. In the view of the Niall Fergusons, it seems, it's simply not fair for popery to return in such nonthreatening guise. As for Cardinal Hume, while we wish he had understood America and some of its other cardinals better, *requiescat in pace.*

FT

The World According to Henry Kissinger

People write memoirs for many reasons, some more noble than others: to set the record straight, to settle scores, to discharge a duty to history, to justify one's actions, to bid for public approval, to indulge the pleasures of nostalgia, to instruct the successor generation, or simply to try to make sense of one's life and the world of which it is part. All these reasons are evident in Henry Kissinger's *Years of Renewal* (Simon & Schuster, 1,151 pp., $35), the third and concluding volume in the account of his service as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State in the Nixon and Ford administrations. Together with *White House Years* and *Years of Upheaval*, this project surely vies for the title of the century's most comprehensive, instructive, and readable record of major league diplomacy. For anyone seriously interested in foreign affairs and, more particularly, the place and prospects of America in the world, it is essential reading.

Years of Renewal covers the time from the swearing in of Gerald Ford, after the August 1974 resignation of Richard Nixon, to the inauguration of Jimmy Carter in January 1977. Of course, to make the story coherent, Kissinger must frequently cut back and forth in time, displaying both the sources and later consequences of the problems with which he dealt. One of the great merits of a book such as this is that it rescues us from the flurry of daily headlines, the events, alarums, and crises both real and fake that once seemed of such enormous moment. If one result is a stronger appreciation of how ephemeral are many of our news-generated anxieties, another is an understanding of how the crises of the moment are, more often than not, symptoms of perduring dilemmas. Consider but a few of the dizzying array of excitements recounted in this volume that kept Kissinger and his colleagues up late at night, shuttling to and fro, jockeying for advantage, threatening and cajoling, promising and seducing, tasting intermittent exultations amid recurring tedium and occasional despair: Turks, Greeks, and Cyprus; détente and nuclear disarmament; civil war in Lebanon; Israel and the "Peace Process"; apartheid in South Africa; civil war in Angola; Marxist insurgencies in Latin America; and on and on.

But the most interesting and most wrenching part of this very big book is about the U.S. and Indochina. For those of us who were caught up in the turbulent disputes over the Vietnam War, and also for those born later, Kissinger's account makes for gripping reading. This is his telling of the much told story, and he tells it with an intense mix of sadness, disillusionment, resentment, and outrage—while striving to maintain a modicum of professorial detachment. Anyone who cares about that story, which continues to shape our domestic politics and foreign policy in sometimes convoluted ways, will want to attend to Kissinger's telling.

Kissinger does not go so far as some who say that the war was effectively won, but he believes there was a very reasonable chance that South Vietnam could have maintained its freedom and independence if the U.S. had continued its modest support after the withdrawal of its troops. The support required was much less than what has been committed to South Korea, which has maintained its independence almost forty years since the aggression from the North. But after Walter Cronkite and the herd of independent minds in the media had misrepresented the Tet Offensive of 1968 as a great defeat, domestic support for continued assistance to Saigon was shattered. Of course Kissinger blames political figures such as George McGovern and William Fulbright, but his harshest and saddest words are reserved for Senator Henry (Scoop) Jackson, who represented himself as something of a conservative and realist in foreign policy but was, in Kissinger's view, as guilty as McGovern in leaving South Vietnam to the tender mercies of Hanoi.

His judgment on the war's outcome is severe:

> The United States devoted two decades of blood and treasure to help a group of newly independent, fledgling societies avoid conquest by their merciless and militarily more powerful Communist neighbor in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> North Vietnam. Yet, when the precarious peace wrought by the Paris Agreement [1973] was challenged, the United States, in the throes of physical and psychological abdication, cut off military and economic assistance to people whom we had given every encouragement to count on our protection. This consigned those we had made our wards to an implacable—and, in Cambodia, genocidal—Communist conqueror.

The shame and the terror of the last helicopter leaving the U.S. embassy in Saigon in April 1975 should be indelibly imprinted on our memory of the past century of horror. Kissinger's account of the confusions and humiliations surrounding that retreat is particularly poignant. Then there was Cambodia, where the Khmer Rouge were at the same time taking over Phnom Penh and would end up by systematically murdering between one and two million Cambodians, 15 to 30 percent of the population. The American ambassador offered to evacuate Sirik Matak, the former prime minister, who on April 12 responded, as the U.S. evacuation was underway, with a handwritten note in elegant French:

> Dear Excellency and Friend:
>
> I thank you very sincerely for your letter and for your offer to transport me towards freedom. I cannot, alas, leave in such a cowardly fashion. As for you, and in particular for your great country, I never believed for a moment that you would have this sentiment of abandoning a people which has chosen liberty. You have refused us your protection, and we can do nothing about it.
>
> You leave, and my wish is that you and your country will find happiness under this sky. But, mark it well, that if I shall die here on the spot and in my country that I love, it is no matter, because we all are born and must die. I have only committed this mistake of believing in you [the Americans].
>
> Please accept, Excellency and dear friend, my faithful and friendly sentiments.

The week of the U.S. evacuation, the headline in the *New York Times* read: "Indochina Without Americans: For Most, a Better Life." The Khmer Rouge first executed all members of the former government who had stayed behind, then all government employees and their families, and then forced the two million inhabitants of Phnom Penh to leave the city for a war-ravaged countryside that could not support them. Sirik Matak was shot in the stomach and left without medical aid. He died after three days.

Who Did What

It is a bitter story, and the bitterness with which Kissinger tells it is fully warranted. In 1965, Father Dan Berrigan, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and I were the first cochairmen of what then was called Clergy Concerned About Vietnam. In the present book, Kissinger indicates, but does not develop, the point that already by 1965 he thought U.S. policy in Vietnam a dangerous mistake. The question was how to withdraw with honor, which meant, above all, keeping faith with those who counted on us. In January 1969, four of us met with Kissinger, newly installed as Nixon's National Security Advisor, in the White House. He told us that, if a year later we did not see persuasive evidence of a policy of U.S. withdrawal of troops from Indochina, he would join our protest against the war. This is compatible with the account of his intentions—and Nixon's and, later, Ford's policies—offered in the present book. By 1971, I had largely withdrawn from what had become Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam, which was probably the largest continuing organization in what was known as the peace movement. I was thoroughly disillusioned with the "radicalized" liberalism that seemed increasingly to want not a just settlement but a Communist victory, and was on my way to joining the company that would go by the name of "the neoconservatives."

As in the case of Senator Jackson, who was championed by this company, Kissinger's book is very hard on conservatives and, especially, on "neocons" who, he charges, were complicit in the callous cutting off of even meager assistance to allies in Indochina. He expected better of these people, and his particular disappointment with *Commentary* and its then editor, Norman Podhoretz, is acute. Later, in 1982, Podhoretz would publish *Why We Were in Vietnam*, a scathing account of the abandonment of Indochina, but by then it was too late to make any difference in policy, as distinct from the never-ending polemics of the intellectual class. I expect that Podhoretz, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and other major players in the neoconservative world of the time will, in due course, have something to say about Kissinger's view of their part in what led up to the catastrophe of 1975. As for my part, I was simply weary of Vietnam and paid slight attention. That is no excuse. I was stirred to action again in the summer of 1975 when I joined with Jim Forest of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Fr. Berrigan, and a few

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

others in protesting to Hanoi its brutal treatment of those in the conquered South. That, too, was too late. We appealed to a little over a hundred people who were identified as national leaders in the movement against the war to join us in our protest. The split was almost exactly fifty-fifty. Those who declined made clear that they subscribed to the maxim, "No enemies on the Left." They were pleased by Hanoi's victory. (For further reflection on those turbulent days, see "Remembering the Movement" in my 1992 book, *America Against Itself*, University of Notre Dame Press.)

The Nixon-Kissinger "breakthrough" with China is almost universally acclaimed, and *Years of Renewal* contains fascinating details about meetings with Chinese leaders, especially with Chairman Mao, who in his last years expressed his preference for "rightists" in world affairs and spoke repeatedly about his soon going to meet the judgment of God. One gets the impression that Kissinger was embarrassed by the second subject. We are not told what he thinks about President Clinton's strange notion of U.S. "partnership" with the brutally repressive regime in Beijing, which is perhaps just as well since after he left office the entanglement of his Kissinger Associates Inc. with corporations operating in China has compromised the credibility of what he says about China policy. On other questions, Kissinger takes pains to answer his critics, especially his conservative and neoconservative critics, about his role as it appears in light of the much later ending of the Cold War.

How the Evil Empire Ended

In the 1970s, Kissinger was much criticized for policies of "détente" and "coexistence" that seemed to assume that the Soviet empire was a permanent feature in world affairs. He now takes much credit for the "third basket" of the 1975 Helsinki agreement of the European Security Conference, dealing with human rights. It is true that leaders such as Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa in Central Europe courageously used the third basket to challenge "the evil empire," but it must be candidly said that little thanks is owed Kissinger for that. The critics at the time had ample reason to say that Helsinki looked like a ratification of Soviet hegemony and the division of Europe created by Yalta. The conservative criticism, Kissinger writes, "was a pity because we did not differ with their analysis of the nature of the Soviet system. Where we disagreed was in assessing its implications for American foreign policy. . . . Far better, we thought, to seize the initiative and control the diplomatic process. In the meantime, we would keep open the possibility that what had begun as tactics might evolve into a more reliable pattern of coexistence."

His critics did not think U.S. policy should be aimed at "a more reliable pattern of coexistence." They thought the goal should be, however long it took and through however circuitous a policy, the end of the Soviet empire. For Kissinger, the paramount concern was for stability and order so that he could "control the diplomatic process." Looking back on the end of the Cold War, Kissinger goes further: "Reagan's policy was, in fact, a canny reassertion of the geopolitical strategies of the Nixon and Ford Administrations clothed in the rhetoric of Wilsonianism—a quintessentially American combination of pragmatism and idealism. In an important sense, the victories of the 1980s derived from a Reaganite variant—not a rejection—of the strategies of the 1970s."

One can understand why Kissinger says that now, but it is utterly implausible. Reagan was neither a historian nor a philosopher, but he made no secret of his belief that the Soviet empire was a temporary aberration, a brutal yet fragile artifact that, if carefully but firmly pressed, could not be sustained. There is no evidence from the time that Kissinger shared that view. Reagan's position was strongly supported also by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In Kissinger's account of the ending of the Cold War, she is not mentioned. Most astonishingly, there is not even one mention of John Paul II. Reagan, Gorbachev, Thatcher, John Paul II—in almost every telling these four were the crucial players in the collapse of the evil empire. In some of the more persuasive scholarly accounts, John Paul II was the most crucial player, since without him there would have been no Walesa, no Solidarity, and no "Polish miracle" that began the unraveling of Soviet control. In Kissinger's extended discussion of one of the most important political, moral, economic, and military events in human history, John Paul II did not exist, Gorbachev was a pawn of events beyond his control, Thatcher goes unmentioned, and Reagan is grudgingly commended for following Kissinger's lead. (I say grudgingly, recalling that "the rhetoric of Wilsonianism" is a deeply pejorative phrase in the Kissinger lexicon.) Such a reconstruction of history is as unseemly as it is incredible.

Kissinger is commonly described as a practitioner of Realpolitik, one who favors stability and order over justice. He writes that his devotion is "to evolution over revolution," which is sensible enough. He wants always to be "realistic" and to deal with the problems of the "real world," which, he says again

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and again, are "complicated," "convoluted," "ambiguous," etc. One is reminded of Herbert Butterfield's observation that realism is not a school of thought but a boast. Given the moralistic boastings and sentimental fuzzy-mindedness of some foreign policy practitioners, not least in the current Administration, such realism is not without its merits. But it also has its severe limitations. From the evidence of his memoirs, Kissinger is never more in his element than when relishing the complexities of making an improbable deal. There is a frequently anti-intellectual tone in his dismissal of critics who presumably don't know about that real world. Kissinger presents himself as the consummate deal-maker, and never more pleased than when a deal can be made circuitously and secretively, producing a public surprise. It is not unlike, I suppose, the satisfactions in doing magic tricks. At the risk of psychologizing, the impression is not entirely dissimilar from Kissinger's extended and fascinating description of the personality and habits of Richard Nixon. In any event, Kissinger's "real world" is a world largely impervious to big ideas and clear moral judgments. In this connection, one notes that Kissinger has a thing, as they used to say, about religion.

In underscoring the complexity of the real world of international affairs, Kissinger employs religious vocabulary in criticizing those who are simplistic or deceived by abstractions. He has no use for the "theology" of the arms control crowd; Hanoi employs "sacramental phraseology" in negotiating; Cambodian genocide has a "near liturgical quality"; and the bureaucracy is given to delivering "homilies." "Sacramental" is the word employed repeatedly to signify what is unreal, evasive, or delusive. One is left wondering where this habit of speech—and, one supposes, of mind—comes from in Kissinger's life experience. He certainly gives no indication of having thought much about religion, or Christianity in particular. Apparently indifferent to philosophy and tone deaf to religion, he makes embarrassing missteps. For instance, in analyzing his difficulties with Archbishop Makarios, the president of Cyprus, he twice asserts that the source of the problem was "a legacy of the Greek Orthodox clergy's historic claim to both secular and religious leadership." Anyone who knows the slightest thing about Orthodoxy knows that the tradition, from the Byzantine Empire to Moscow's evil empire, is exactly the opposite: the subordination of the Church to the state in what is pejoratively called caesaropapism.

More than with the first two volumes, I am struck by the ways in which *Years of Renewal* underscores Kissinger's observation that anyone entering upon public service had better get a good education first because afterwards he has to live on his intellectual capital. Kissinger evidences very little intellectual curiosity. These thousands of pages are infinitely detailed about tactics, maneuverings, logistics, and personalities but are impatient of ideas, except for the one big idea of power. Apart from memos and briefs related to the tasks at hand, he seems to have had little time for reading, which is perhaps not surprising, given the exhausting pace at which he worked, caught up, one gathers, in a perpetual shuttle from crisis to crisis, from deal to deal. His critics on the domestic front are, in distinction from those who gladly betrayed their country's interests, persistently described as Wilsonians, ideologues, idealists, moralists, and others trapped "in our nation's historic quest for moral purity." In this context, "moral purity" drips with authorial derision.

I suppose Kissinger may have written these three big books for most of the reasons mentioned at the outset of this reflection, but certainly not for the last one—"to try to make sense of one's life and the world of which it is part." At least there is slight evidence in these curiously impersonal books that that was among his purposes. In a time of narcissism and tell-all exhibitionism, there is a lot to be said for such reticence. At the same time, his determination to, as he might put it, stick to the facts of the real world may reveal more about Henry Kissinger than the true confessions he did not write. The third volume concludes on a personal note, however. It is a letter from his father, who was then very ill, written in 1946.

> In all the hard times of the war, the confidence lived in me that God will protect you. I am grateful to Him that He was with you. . . . Always keep in mind that we find real satisfaction only in what we are doing for others. Try always to be good, faithful, helpful, reliable, selfless.
>
> I would have liked to see you grown up and to be witness of your success and happiness. God bless you.

The last words of the book are, "My father recovered and lived until 1982 through all the events described in these memoirs." The clear implication is that his father got to see what he hoped to see. One must hope that Henry Kissinger is right about that.

FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Institutional "Faith Alone"

Salvation by "faith alone" has been given a new twist, except in this case we're talking about the salvation of institutions. Addressing a Salvation Army conference in Atlanta, Vice President Al Gore endorsed the "charitable choice" proposal originally advanced by conservative Republican Senator John Ashcroft of Missouri. The proposal would allow government funding of "faith-based" social services. Said Gore, "For too long, faith-based organizations have wrought miracles on a shoestring. With the steps I'm proposing today, they will no longer need to depend on faith alone." Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute, who has been a formidable champion of efforts to get U.S. foreign policy on the side of religious freedom, is among the strong opponents of the Ashcroft-Gore direction, fearing that it will mean the co-optation of religious programs by the government. "Who do you want running these groups: the best saver of souls or the best reader of the *Federal Register*?" he asks. (The *Register* is the government publication scanned by grant seekers for funding opportunities.)

James Pinkerton, policy advisor in the Reagan Administration, shares Horowitz's misgivings. "Churches," he says, "will be sorely tempted to grab for the apple of federal funding. But once they bite, the last remaining reservoir of political innocence will be gone." Government funding of religiously based programs is a question frequently addressed in these pages. The late Dean Kelley, a dear friend and relentless proponent of religious freedom, was insistent in cautioning, "The Queen's shilling is followed by the Queen's command." He, Horowitz, Pinkerton, and others are entirely right to warn about the perils involved in proposals such as "charitable choice," as well as in education vouchers and similar measures. But I believe the risks must be taken.

First, there are millions of people, especially the poor, who would greatly benefit by programs aimed not simply at "delivering services" but at transforming lives. Second, it is a long-standing and grave injustice that religious programs serving a public purpose are discriminated against simply because they are religious. Third, sustained political attentiveness, combined with growing judicial "accommodation" on church-state questions, can help prevent funded programs from becoming government agents. Fourth and most important, it is up to those who run such programs to make sure that their religious integrity is not compromised, and that can be done in a new climate in which what are pejoratively referred to as "sectarian" purposes are no longer penalized.

The critics are right in noting that the vitality of religious schools and social services is related to the sacrifices, financial and other, of those who voluntarily support them (by "faith alone," if you will). Could that be undermined by government support? The answer is clearly yes. We may, however, be moving into a new era in which that peril is more than matched by high promise. Religious institutions will be free to decline government funding, and no doubt many will. But this much is certain: the unjust and irrational discrimination against religion, and the systematic denial of services to those who need them, is no longer tolerable. Conceivably, we may live to rue the day when law and public policy abandoned the old strictures of a rigid "separation of church and state." The law of unintended consequences has not been repealed. Whether or not things will turn out as the critics fear, however, is entirely up to us.

FT

Clinton and Character Revisited

Along with words of high praise, there have been some critical reviews of my extended reflection, "Bill Clinton and the American Character," in the June/July issue. The gist of the criticism is that I let the American people off too lightly, suggesting that, in the sleazy soap opera running from January 1998 through the failed impeachment effort, they were more sinned against than sinning.

I do not wish to indulge in what William J. Bennett calls "wishful assertions," but my conclusion is somewhat different from his. I might have avoided some misunderstandings had I made it clear that my question is: What have we learned about the character of the American people from these events *that we did not know before*? Sensible people know that the idea of a national character is as dubious as the discussion of it is inevitable. Those who think I let the citizenry off too lightly produce a long and depressing list of pervasive cultural and moral debilitations that were on display during Clinton's Year of Lies. To which my response is, Yes, but we knew that before; we did not learn it from these recent events.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Over the last decade Bennett himself has provided a useful service in promulgating what he calls "an index of leading cultural indicators." He and others have amply documented a dreary record of decline and fragmentation with respect to marriage, divorce, teenage sexuality, falling educational standards, and weakened adherence to the virtue traditions in American life. At a different level of analysis, I offered in 1984, in *The Naked Public Square*, an examination of the ways in which religion and religiously grounded morality have been systematically excluded from public life. Religiously informed morality has been hermetically sealed in the sphere of privacy and personal preference, from which it is near impossible to make judgments regarding life in the public square. Indeed public moral judgment has been largely discredited as "judgmentalism." The philosophical causes of this fateful turn were brilliantly analyzed by Alasdair MacIntyre in his 1981 book, *After Virtue*. The consequences of this intellectual undermining of the virtue tradition for moral formation and deformation are evident from grade school through graduate school, and, of course, also in our political culture.

What we have known about the American character for a long time was incisively set forth by Philip Rieff in *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, first published in 1966. Rieff, you may recall, contended that Western history has passed through several defining models of human life and community. In the Greco-Roman period the model was that of political man; in Christendom it was religious man; in the Enlightenment it was what he calls economic man, meaning the life of rational calculation. After Freud, says Rieff, we have psychological man. The triumph of the therapeutic is a condition in which there is no publicly acknowledged good beyond that of a "sense of well-being." The good society is one in which no ego is offended or constricted, and most certainly not constricted by moral judgment. We heard William Bennett worry that history may conclude that William Jefferson Clinton really was the representative man of our time. That worry is given credibility by the prescient words of Philip Rieff, written when Mr. Clinton was still a teenager. The passage deserves quotation in full:

> The wisdom of the next social order [the therapeutic society], as I imagine it, would not reside in right doctrine, administered by the right men, who must be found, but rather in doctrines amounting to permission for each man to live an experimental life. Thus, once again, culture will give back what it has taken away. All governments will be just, so long as they secure that consoling plenitude of option in which modern satisfaction really consists. In this way the emergent culture could drive the value problem clean out of the social system and, limiting it to a form of philosophical entertainment in lieu of edifying preachment, could successfully conclude the exercise for which politics is the name. Problems of democracy need no longer prove so difficult as they have been. Psychological man is likely to be indifferent to the ancient question of legitimate authority, of sharing in government, so long as the powers that be preserve social order and manage an economy of abundance. The danger of politics lies more in the ancient straining to create those symbols or support those institutions that narrow the range of virtues or too narrowly define the sense of well-being; for the latter seems to be the real beatitude toward which men have always strained. Psychological man, in his independence from all gods, can feel free to use all god-terms; I imagine he will be a hedger against his own bets, a user of any faith that lends itself to therapeutic use.

Bill Clinton as the representative man of his time? It is worth considering. The demand for permission "to live an experimental life." Politics as the feeling of any pain that limits the "plenitude of option." In independence from the gods who impose and judge, the freedom to use all god-terms and any faith, especially those that, when one is caught, communicate to more traditional folk one's contrition for violating the constraints by which one is not bound. I hope this does not sound cynical. (With respect to the continuing low theater of our politics, a friend complains, "I'm trying to be cynical, but I just can't keep up.")

A further observation by Philip Rieff sounds disturbingly familiar now. Of culture as therapy he writes:

> The rules of health indicate activity; psychological man can exploit older cultural precepts, ritual struggle no less than play therapy, in order to maintain the dynamism of his culture. Of course, the newest Adam cannot be expected to limit himself to the use of old constraints. If "immoral" materials, rejected under earlier cultural criteria, are therapeutically effective, enhancing somebody's sense of well-being, then they are useful. The "end" or "goal" is to keep going.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Americans, as F. Scott Fitzgerald concluded, believe in the green light.

Americans believe in the green light, as we were constantly reminded by Mr. Clinton and his allies who urged us to put this behind us and move on. A yellow light, never mind stopping for a red light, is suspiciously un-American. On score after score, Philip Rieff's depiction of the therapeutic society and psychological man eerily anticipated what we have been through in the past year and a half, and indeed the two terms of the Clinton presidency.

Books such as *After Virtue*, *The Naked Public Square*, and *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* attempted to say things that we have known about the American character for a long time now. These are not the only things that we know about the American character. Recall the caution that America is a society so vast and so various that almost any generalization made about it is amply supported by evidence. Yet we have no choice but to make generalizations, in the hope of devising a conceptual framework or story-line by which we can understand the historical moment and our place in it. I suggest this generalization: The coercive privatization of religion and religiously grounded morality, the abandonment of the virtue traditions, and the triumph of the therapeutic are very important parts of what we know about our society and our culture. But they are not the whole of it.

Already in the 1970s, I was discussing the great conflicts in our public life in terms of a "culture war." That phrase has been criticized for being excessively polemical, but I am afraid that the phrase is all too accurate. Alasdair MacIntyre has observed, paraphrasing Clausewitz, that our politics has become warfare carried on by other means. The war is over the definition of American culture, and over whether there is or should be a definable American culture. Culture is that which gives expression to who we are and aspire to be, and is, of course, rooted in *cultus*, indicating that culture reflects what we revere, and even what we worship. Thus—inevitably and ominously—culture wars are not entirely unlike wars of religion. American culture has never been entirely one thing; and certainly it has not been one thing since the collapse of the liberal Protestant cultural hegemony in the last half century. More generally, no culture is just one thing. In the 1920s the great G. K. Chesterton visited America and declared it to be a nation with the soul of a church. The British journalist Alistair Cooke agreed, adding that it is also a nation with the soul of a whorehouse. Both generalizations are amply supported by the evidence.

What I believe we have learned from the recent unpleasantness is what happens when the office of the presidency is not on the side of the nation with the soul of a church. Or, put differently, when the presidency is captive to a different church which employs old rituals and god-terms in devotion to psychological man's religion of the actualized self following his bliss (Joseph Campbell) to a sense of secured well-being. The culture of which Bill Clinton may be the representative man has been with us for a long time. But it has always had to contend against a countervailing culture, and this contention gives shape to what is aptly described as the culture war.

So, in light of the past year and a half, what have we learned about the American character that we did not know before? I suggest that we have not learned very much. We have learned what happens to a nation with the soul of a church and the soul of a whorehouse when it has a President such as this. Maybe, just maybe, we have learned never again to entrust the presidency to a person of such reckless habits and suspect character. We have learned that our political system is defenseless against a talented and shameless representative of a therapeutic culture that recognizes no appeal beyond a basely defined sense of well-being. In sum, we have learned to hope with renewed intensity that Mr. Dooley was right when he said that God looks out for drunks, little children, and the United States of America.

FT

The (Dead) End of Determinism

Few arguments have stirred as much discussion in recent years as Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History," first published as an article in 1989 and then, in 1992, as a book by the same title. More recently, his *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order* (Free Press) has appeared, and we will be giving it major attention in these pages. While admiring the author's manifest brilliance and imaginative powers, I confess that I was not much taken with the "end of history" thesis. My reasons were similar to those expressed by historian Gertrude Himmelfarb in her essay in a symposium on Fukuyama published in the summer issue of the *National Interest*. She is suspicious of grand "philosophies of history," recalling Fernand Braudel's writing of history in terms of "inanimate forces" and "deeper realities," by comparison with which human interests,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passions, and ideas were of slight consequence. Braudel exclaimed, "Down with occurrences, especially vexing ones! I had to believe that history, destiny, was written at a much more profound level." For Himmelfarb, history is occurrences, and much of the time they are vexing ones. As I have probably written too often, whether in philosophy, theology, or social criticism, we should profoundly distrust theories that slight the thusness and soness of things.

The symposium is in response to Fukuyama's "second thoughts" on his 1989 article—thoughts which have led him to a greater appreciation, evident in the most recent book, of the "new science" that is transforming human nature and the social order. Writing in the *Weekly Standard* (June 28, 1999), Andrew Ferguson takes on both Fukuyama and the new science for their construction of an essentially unscientific (in the sense of testable or falsifiable) mythology of materialism and determinism. Ferguson and some in the *National Interest* symposium accuse Fukuyama of wanting to have his cake and eat it, too: to assert a continuing "human nature" that is, at the same time, infinitely malleable, to affirm scientific determinism while leaving room for human decision and even for something like the soul. Harvey Mansfield of Harvard takes up a somewhat different but related concern:

> Fukuyama concentrates his doubts on the new developments in biotechnology, particularly on two new drugs, Ritalin and Prozac, illustrating the scary character of modern science. Such drugs may seem capable of creating a "new type of human being." But in fact they simply help to constitute the Last Man, whose definition has been available at least since the early writings of Marx. Ritalin tempers the high spirits of boys, and Prozac raises the low spirits of women. The result is that we will no longer be troubled by psychic sexual differences and all will be equally capable of the same equanimity. Anyway, why would we want to be troubled if, life being perfect, there is nothing to be troubled about? Fukuyama can see that these drugs contribute to the belittlement, not the esteem of man. Men are belittled when they do not feel joy or despair, even though, or precisely because, such sentiments are often mistaken or excessive. Nothing great is gained for us if nothing important can be lost. The modern project for reducing risk can be seen at work not only in economics but even in the element of esteem, where it moves us to equalize our chances and to smooth out life's ups and downs. Fukuyama rightly wonders whether, when you take such drugs or other soothing therapy, you are still yourself; or have you given your self away to keep it safe? The situation gets worse if one were to push Fukuyama to decide whether esteem is really recognition in the Hegelian manner. Hegel conceived that recognition is equal because in recognizing what is other, one recognizes oneself. But if the other is always the alienated self, there is nothing in the universe except the self. Then what are we to say of a life devoted to finding the self that is always ready to abandon the self, that vacillates between desiring recognition and settling for prudent submission? We know that the modern, well-adjusted self belittles man because we know from religions and philosophies wiser than Hegel that it cannot satisfy human nature. Men cannot be satisfied if there is nothing above them to admire and strive for. At the end of history we may decide to rob ourselves of our humanity, and indeed the most telling charge against American education today is that it gives our children nothing to look up to. But if we do that, it will have been our delusion and our fault.

Determined but Choosing

Readers will recognize the similarity to the future envisioned by Walker Percy in books such as *Love in the Ruins* and *The Thanatos Syndrome*. The discontents of civilization are "vanished" as the self leaves civilization and presses a button to become another self. Also of particular interest in the symposium is the contribution of Harvard's E. O. Wilson, author of *On Human Nature* and *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. "In a nutshell," writes Wilson, "human nature is not the genes that prescribe it. Nor is it the cultural universals, such as incest taboos and rites of passage, which are its products. Rather, human nature is the epigenetic rules, the highly diverse inherited regularities of development in mental traits and their physiological modulators. These rules are the genetic biases in the way our senses perceive the world, the symbolic coding by which we represent the world, the options we open to ourselves, and the responses we find easiest and most rewarding to make." Then comes the really interesting part:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In sum, in heredity as in the environment, you cannot do just one thing. When a gene is changed by mutation or replaced by another gene, unexpected and possibly unpleasant side effects are likely to follow. Although a complete base pair sequencing and then gene mapping are expected to be completed within a decade, we are probably generations away from a complete genomics—the genetic maps plus all the molecular steps by which the code is read out in final phenotypic traits. By the time the treacherous waters of possible genomic intervention and replacement are charted, I suspect a moral argument will keep *Homo sapiens* from traveling there except for gene therapy and minor enhancement. The epigenetic rules—human nature—are not just the algorithms by which individuals are assembled. They are the essence of humanity, the product of millions of years of adaptation to this unique, life-giving planet. They are all we have that separates us from carbon-based all-purpose computers, or transformation into jerrybuilt artifacts. It is one thing to evolve toward taller, brighter, more sociable beings; it is quite another to change or even lose our humanity. In my opinion, human beings will never choose to become posthuman.

There is a measure of comfort in Wilson's words, but note that his oft reiterated dogma is "scientific materialism." Although he doesn't like the word, his dogma (as Ferguson says, the mythology of the new science) is also thoroughly deterministic. But behold! No matter to what manipulations we subject *Homo sapiens* (meaning ourselves), "a moral argument" will prevent us from taking the last and catastrophic step. We will *choose* not to become posthuman. Of course we must hope that Wilson is right about that, and that we will choose sooner rather than later—as in choosing today to prohibit, for instance, cloning and the eugenic projects associated with embryonic stem cell experimentation. But Wilson's moral argument and choosing cannot be squared with his relentlessly deterministic materialism. One is tempted to conclude that, while Fukuyama may be wrong about the end of history, the discussion surrounding his work suggests that the end of clear thinking is already upon us. So long, however, as we recognize that as a temptation to be resisted, it has not happened, at least not definitively.

FT

Proposing Democracy Anew—Part One

The phrase "Christian America," I have suggested, is a description under the judgment of an aspiration. If we ask what is the quintessentially American aspiration, a number of candidates come to mind: freedom, equality, opportunity, justice. But most, if not all, of the possible answers to that question are summed up in the word "democracy." Departing from the usual format of this section, I begin in this issue a three-part reflection on ten proposals about what makes democracy both possible and necessary. The proposals are closely connected to Judeo-Christian presuppositions and, more specifically, to Catholic social teaching, which is thoroughly ecumenical in substance. It is also necessary to be attentive to Catholic social teaching because, among other reasons, many non-Catholics of good will are honestly puzzled about how the Catholic Church can support democracy. After all, the Catholic Church itself is not organized democratically. It is a hierarchical institution in the service of advancing authoritative (some would say authoritarian) truth claims. And for all Christians there would seem to be nothing very democratic about the belief that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Surely, it is said, there is a credibility problem with respect to the Church's affirmation of democracy. I should quickly add that it is not only non-Catholics who are dubious about the Church's support for democracy. Many Catholics, especially those who think of themselves as traditionalists, are deeply skeptical about democracy. Democracy, in this view, is one of a horde of pernicious doctrines that modernity unleashed in its attack on Catholic truth. If, as it is said, the Second Vatican Council of the early 1960s came around to a more friendly disposition toward democracy, that is but further evidence that a doubtfully inspired Council caved in to the Zeitgeist of a historical moment marked by madness unbounded. This, it should be noted, is a distinctly minority view among Catholics, but it should not be ignored. One reason it should not be ignored is that it reminds us that democracy is still a relatively new thing on the world scene. Asked what he thought about the French Revolution, Chairman Mao's foreign minister, Chou En-lai, said, "It's too early to tell." Christians who have a historical memory and an appreciation of the many different kinds of regimes under which the Church lives today and will likely live in the future should not absolutize liberal democracy. At the same time, we can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uncompromisingly affirm the principles which today find expression in democratic theory and practice.

Although not so commonly encountered today, there is an old argument that used to be pressed vigorously by conservatives in America, namely, that our government is not a democracy but a republic. For many reasons—not least because what is now called conservatism is more populist than earlier conservatisms—that argument is not so frequently heard today. Suffice it that the founders certainly intended to establish a republic and the institutions of American government are republican in character. I think it accurate to say that ours is a democratic government conducted through republican means. It is not a direct but a representative democracy. But it is a democracy because political sovereignty is vested in the people, the *demos*. That is evident in the foundational assertion of the Declaration of Independence that "governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." In this understanding, such consent is given not just once and for all time, but must be constantly elicited if the government is to continue to be legitimate.

The "New" Thing

A new century and a new millennium is a time to think anew, and some think the problem with democracy is that it is old hat. Lecturing a while back at a major state university in the midwest, I was challenged by a political science student. "You say so much about openness to the future, yet aren't you captive to a democratic theory and practice of the past?" That is, as lecturers inevitably say, a good question. Longtime readers will not be surprised if I say that I am not embarrassed by the charge that I am respectful of the past. Yet, in response to the question posed, I believe the idea of democracy is as audaciously new today as when it was first proposed. If it does not have to be reinvented, it certainly has to be rethought, by every generation. Today there is a particular urgency about rethinking democracy in relation to its moral and religious grounding.

Let it frankly be admitted that in this connection Protestantism is in some ways historically privileged. One thinks, for instance, of A. D. Lindsay's *The Modern Democratic State*, which, first published in 1943, has not been surpassed in demonstrating how democratic theory and practice emerged from the left wing of the Reformation, notably from the revolution of Cromwell in England. This is not to deny that the seeds of democracy are to be found in pre-Reformation Christian ideas about the person, community, and freedom. There is, for instance, Thomas Aquinas and his defense of mendicant communities as necessarily free agents in service of the truth, an argument fraught with implications about the connections between freedom and governmental legitimacy. Many other examples of the anticipation of liberal democracy are explored in the work of Christopher Dawson, that great and sadly neglected historian. But that is a subject for another time.

Most recent writers on democracy have been of a thoroughly secularist bent, being either indifferent to or ignorant of its roots in Christian history, and in Judaism before that. The political philosopher Leo Strauss wrote insightfully on the theme of Athens and Jerusalem, but in his view, though he was religiously attuned to Jerusalem, Athens was Athens and Jerusalem was Jerusalem and never the twain shall meet. A recent book on the development of democracy by a noted Straussian leaps with erudite insouciance from the fifth century Athens of Pericles to the U.S. Constitution. More commonly, contemporary writers on democracy seem determined to begin from scratch, so to speak. They write in a mode of apparent historical amnesia, and sometimes the amnesia is quite deliberate. One thinks, for instance, of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, in which the definition of democratic justice emerges from behind a "veil of ignorance," where we are to deliberate as though we quite literally do not know who we are. It is a striking instance of what is frequently examined in these pages, the attempt to step outside the civilizational circle of conversation. Quite literally, Rawls and others create a story of fictional human beings and their interests, and then suggest that, on the basis of such fictions, we should adopt principles for action and see how things go.

My proposals for democracy are intended to be keenly attentive to what we know about who we are, what is in our interest, and what is in the interest of others. Democracy needs to be proposed because not everybody is convinced that it is the polity we should want for the future. Along the way of making these proposals, I hope it will become apparent what I mean by democracy, and then perhaps there will be greater agreement that a more democratic society is the only "new society" that the political science student at Michigan State and the rest of us should be working toward.

In Catholic social teaching, the most recent and impressive argument on democratic theory and practice is the 1991 encyclical of John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*. My understanding of what we call liberal democracy, and of church-state relations in democracy, is also informed by reflection on political philosophy and history, with specific reference to the experience of the United States of America. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American experience is both a model and a warning for the rest of the world. It is important to emphasize both of those aspects, the model and the warning.

To Be a "National" Society

For a number of years now, I have been involved in the *Centesimus Annus* Seminar in Krakow, Poland. In that seminar we bring together young academics and clergy from Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries to study Catholic teaching regarding the free and just society. Since the Revolution of 1989, I have noticed a striking change in the attitudes of Central European students toward democracy, and more particularly toward the American version of democracy. In the first few years, everything American was thought to be good. We had to caution the students against an uncritical admiration of everything American.

More recently, a certain disillusionment has been evident. In Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ukraine—and especially in Russia—people have discovered that democracy is not easy. After the Communist era, these societies declared their determination to be "normal" societies. Now they have discovered that normality is difficult. It is difficult in Poland as it is difficult in the United States, as it is difficult in Italy, Zimbabwe, Brazil, and everywhere else in the world. Our seminar students have learned that they cannot simply imitate things American but must find their own way to democracy. And yet—as the largest, the most influential, and arguably the oldest and most vital democratic experiment in world history—America remains both model and warning. In Central and Eastern Europe today, the question of American democracy and the question of American power get entangled in confusing ways. There is a sometimes latent but nonetheless strong streak of anti-Americanism in many European minds. That is in part a leftover from Marxist ideological influences, in part an understandable envy of America's preeminence on so many scores, and in part a justifiable resentment of the imperious, if not imperial, ways the U.S. throws its weight around. (International affairs are not, and probably cannot be, conducted democratically.)

There is no dispute that the U.S. is the only remaining superpower in the world. Some go further and say that America is the world's "lead society," meaning that what happens in America will, sooner or later, mutatis mutandis, happen elsewhere. There is a strong element of truth in this. As we have had frequent occasion to observe, the world deserves a better "lead society" than the U.S., but this is what the world is stuck with, at least for the foreseeable future.

Catholic social teaching in the past, I think it fair to say, has been somewhat indifferent to the American experience. When Rome addressed questions such as democracy and church-state relations, it was usually with the French Revolution of 1789 chiefly in mind. In recent years, and most impressively in the pontificate of John Paul II, that has changed dramatically. It seems to me, however, that in the United States and elsewhere Catholic intellectuals have hardly begun to internalize the impressive teaching initiatives of the pontificate. As George Weigel contends in his magnificent *Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II* (HarperCollins), coming to terms with the arguments of John Paul is a great task for years to come. We are dealing here with what is called, following John Henry Newman, the development of doctrine. That development will be clearer if, as with *Centesimus Annus*, we give the Revolution of 1776 at least equal billing with the Revolution of 1789 in addressing democracy, church-state relations, and related questions.

A Higher Sovereignty

There are ten propositions about democracy that command our attention (they could, of course, be divided or combined into more or less than ten). The first proposition is this: *The sovereignty of the democratic state is answerable to a higher sovereignty.* Critics of democratic theory and practice, including Christian critics, frequently claim that the chief problem with democracy is that it acknowledges no sovereignty higher than the sovereignty of the people. The democratic state, claiming to represent the vox populi, presents itself as the vox Dei, thus turning the democratic state into an "idol." In response, we must recognize that the democratic state, and democracy itself, can indeed become an idol. When that happens, it is a profound distortion of democracy.

To be sure, in democracy political sovereignty is vested in the people. But a free people is free to acknowledge and hold itself accountable to a sovereignty higher than itself. In this respect also, 1776 is very different from 1789. In the Jacobin version of democracy, the state is assumed to embody what Rousseau called the General Will, beyond which there is no higher court of appeal. In the American founding, by way of dramatic contrast, it is recognized that society is prior to, and superior to, the state. The Declaration of Independence speaks of "Nature and Nature's God," from whom all rights are derived and to whom the people constitute themselves as accountable. Although it is of much later provenance, the Pledge of Allegiance in the U.S. speaks of "one nation under God." That means, first of all, "under

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

judgment"—the nation is answerable to a judgment higher than that of the state, higher than positive law, and higher even than the will of the people. The paradox, of course, is that only the will of the people can maintain the effective *awareness* of being under the judgment of a higher will. (God will attend to the *reality* of our being under judgment.)

In the actual decision-making of the American polity, this higher sovereignty is asserted obliquely rather than directly. That is to say, it depends upon the people continuing to acknowledge such a higher sovereignty. The point was made emphatically and repeatedly by the founders, including Thomas Jefferson, who some contemporary writers erroneously depict as a premature member of the American Civil Liberties Union. John Adams put it this way: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other." The constitutional order is not "a machine that runs of itself." It must be sustained by a virtuous citizenry, and by popular religion that publicly appeals to a sovereignty that transcends the sovereignty of the state. These conditions cannot be guaranteed. That is why democracy is always a risky enterprise. That is why the founders called our constitutional order an "experiment." It is in the nature of experiments that they can succeed or they can fail, and they succeed only when we keep in mind the possibility of their failing.

The End of Freedom

The Religion Clause of the First Amendment to our Constitution contains two provisions. One forbids the "establishment" of a religion, and the other guarantees the "free exercise" of religion. The "no establishment" provision is in the service of the "free exercise" provision. Free exercise is the end, and no establishment is one means in the service of that end. This understanding of the Religion Clause, as every student of the subject knows, has not always prevailed in our jurisprudence. Indeed, in recent years, the courts have frequently acted as though "no establishment" is the end, and in the service of that end they have sharply curtailed the free exercise of religion, at least in the public sphere. This has resulted in the unhappy circumstance that I have described as the naked public square.

The naked public square is a thoroughly secularized public life from which religion and religiously grounded moral judgment have been excluded. At present, this constitutes the most severe crisis in church-state relations, and, I think it not too much to say, the most severe crisis in the American democratic experiment itself. In the constitutional order rightly understood, the state acknowledges a sovereignty higher than itself, and acknowledges that that sovereignty is defined by the people. In "Christian America" the institution that bears witness to that higher sovereignty is the church. (I here speak of the lower-case "church," including all the Christian denominations and the synagogue, as well as—and this may become more important in the course of the coming century—the mosque.) The state recognizes the integrity of the church, not simply as a voluntary association of individuals, but as a communal bearer of the witness to a higher sovereignty from which, through the consent of the governed, the legitimacy of the state itself is derived.

(To be continued next month with a second proposition: *In a democratic society, people live under several, and sometimes conflicting, sovereignties.*)

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Around the corner, on 22nd Street and Broadway, a big new branch of Restoration Hardware has opened. This is a booming chain that started in California (of course) and caters to boomers who are a touch uneasy about their affluent and liberated "lifestyles," wanting to connect to something more authentic through old-fashioned gadgets that are not limited to what is ordinarily meant by hardware. Writing in the *New Yorker*, David Brooks offers sardonic reflection: "Restoration evokes the places we have thoughtlessly abandoned: the small communities that ambitious people leave; the downtowns that have been hollowed out by car-friendly shopping malls; the local industrial crafts that are being driven out of business by our global economy; the old-fashioned family traditions we have neglected in the rush to be modern and mobile. Restoration reminds us that it is not too late to avoid the spiritual trap set by our relentless upward mobility. We can rediscover the essential things, and, best of all, we can do so while shopping." Brooks concludes: "In a characteristic moment, Nietzsche mocked modern man by saying, 'He needs history because it is the storage closet where all the costumes are kept. He notices that none really fits him.' Perhaps Nietzsche is right. None of the old costumes fit. But maybe the dustpans do. Maybe the little salt-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cellars can bring back the old traditions and the old virtues. And, anyway, at only twelve dollars it's worth a shot."

■ An alert reader sends this by Norman Lear on raising money for Democrats: "The relationship between Hollywood and Washington is as natural as a marriage." For Hollywood, much more natural I should think.

■ A "strong" writer, as we use the term in this shop, is someone who writes lucidly and memorably about things that matter. Paul J. Griffiths of the University of Chicago is a strong writer. In the *Journal of Religion* he addresses the question of epistemology—the theory of how we know what we know—and its connection with theology. He begins with this: "Epistemology has mattered a great deal to theology since the seventeenth century. It is the central thesis of this essay that it has mattered mostly in the wrong way, and that the effects upon theology of taking epistemology out of its proper station have been very largely negative. In extreme cases these effects have included the abandonment of theology; and even in more moderate instances the result has been a Babylonian captivity in which theology has become a worshiper of alien epistemological gods and has been gagged and fettered by them so that she can only whisper where she ought declaim and hobble where she ought stride. It is not that epistemology is irrelevant to theology; but its role is that of servant, not master, and when this is not properly understood epistemic tests are likely to become to theology as Jephthah's pronunciation test was to the Ephraimites (Judges 12): a condition upon survival that cannot be met. The Ephraimites could have passed Jephthah's test only by abandoning their natural and native tongue; this is also what epistemology requires of theology when its tests are given excessive weight. And, just like the Ephraimites, theology has often given up the ghost because of her inability to reshape her discourse. This is evident in the work of some among the most prominent of contemporary theologians: they retain the name but almost none of the substance of theological work." Griffiths' foil in this argument is Schubert Ogden, one of the most prominent of Protestant theologians in the last half century, who, Griffiths thinks, has abandoned the natural and native tongue of Christianity in obeisance to presumably universal epistemic principles. "If, then (it would seem to follow for Ogden), you make a claim and, when challenged, either refuse to validate it or attempt to do so and fail, you are thereby failing in your epistemic duties in continuing to believe it—you are, perhaps, substituting adherence to the deliverances of authority for adherence to those of critical reason. The method for validation suggested by Ogden here then has the power of veto (the Lockean and Humean parallels are obvious): it suggests a principle by which the process of forming and ordering beliefs ought always to be governed, everywhere and by all (*semper, ubique, ab omnibus*: here, as is usual, the quest for epistemic principles that can function as first philosophy is a pale and ersatz reflection to properly Christian views about the teachings of the Church), a principle that must be adhered to on pain of such evils as irrationality and unwarranted assertion." There is, says Griffiths, a necessary role for epistemology in Christian apologetics, and in making clear what it is that the Church believes to be true, but Christian truth claims should not be trimmed to fit "alien" epistemological principles. "Rather than this, the Church will offer catechesis to those who make such proposals and will pray that they might accept it, for only by proper catechesis (which involves submission to authority) can the intellectual and moral virtues appropriate to understanding of and adherence to a properly Christian epistemology be developed." The question of how Christians know what they know is the subject of another article on which Paul Griffiths—productive fellow that I know him to be—may be working at this very moment. If so, I have no doubt it will affirm both faith and reason in a way that does not require Christians to abandon their "natural and native tongue."

■ Linda Chavez has been writing and talking about affirmative action for a long time, more than twenty years now. She knows all the arguments. So she was surprised that Pulitzer Prize-winning David Halberstam's remark about affirmative action irritated her. He said that it's a "tax" on whites, and he was happy to pay it given the long history of discrimination against blacks in America and the attendant white privilege. She writes: "What bothered me in his formulation was not just the knowledge that this tax is almost never borne by the Halberstams of the world—Harvard class of '55 and all the wealth and fame that goes with having written more than half a dozen bestsellers. More often than not, this tax falls on the working-class policemen or firemen who have been denied promotions because of an affirmative action plan, or their children who have been kept out of top-ranked state universities because of a race-based preference in admissions. But my anger was probably more personal than principled. I resented Halberstam's description because it seemed infuriatingly patronizing. Here

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was yet another guilty white liberal out to do me and all my black and brown brethren a huge favor. 'Has it ever occurred to you,' I asked him, 'that some of the intended beneficiaries of your noblesse oblige may not want to bear the stigma that goes along with being judged by lower standards than whites?'" His answer, if any, is not reported.

■ From an aerial view, the human population looks like a cancerous growth on planet Earth. Or so says physician and epidemiologist Dr. Warren M. Hern, who, perhaps not incidentally, is big in the abortion business. Considering that the developed world, notably Western Europe, has a birth rate that assures a declining-to-disappearing population in the future, this gloomy observation comes as something of a surprise. It was popular fare, though, at a meeting of the American Anthropological Society in December 1998, where the ideas of the Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus were enthusiastically bandied about. This too comes as something of a surprise, since Malthus predicted two hundred years ago that imminent overpopulation beyond the planet's capacity would lead to mass poverty, misery, and destruction, and, as far as we can tell, that hasn't happened. There has been more than enough misery in this century that John Paul II calls "a century of tears," but overpopulation is not among the chief culprits. In fact, population growth rates are beginning to trail off, even in apparently overpopulated areas such as Bangladesh. But the theory's being devastatingly falsified does not deter Malthusians any more than the collapse of communism deters some Marxists. Thus in the symposium entitled "Is the Human Species a Cancer on the Planet?" one Dr. Lynn Margulis—known for her "Gaia Hypothesis," which postulates that Earth is one giant organism herself—solemnly asserted, "For millions of years, the Earth got along without human beings, and it will do so again. The only question is the nature of the human demise that has already begun." In agreeing with her, anthropologist Dr. Kenneth Wise insists he is not necessarily supporting human extermination on the record, since, after all, "facing up to dangerous ideas is not the same as advocating them." The conference participants don't expect that the great unwashed overpopulated masses will take them seriously anyway. "You don't seem to realize the problems created by population pressures until you get old, and then nobody listens to you," complained another anthropologist, Dr. Bernice A. Kaplan. In some instances, that is probably a very good thing.

■ In the front of this issue Pastor Russell Saltzman has a winsomely forceful reflection on the lure of using "expendable" human lives in the service of medical research. (You're right, "winsomely forceful" is not a conjunction frequently encountered, but that's what it is.) His piece gives welcome occasion to mention a fine statement issued by the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity (CBHD), entitled "On Human Embryos and Medical Research: An Appeal for Ethically Responsible Science and Public Policy." The statement notes that the National Bioethics Advisory Commission of the National Institutes of Health is calling for a modification of the current ban against federally funded embryo research in order to permit direct federal funding for destructive harvesting of stem cells from human embryos. While some scientists have stated that "stem cell research is too promising to be slowed, impeded, or stopped," the CBHD statement argues, this rationalization only "underscore[s] the sort of utopianism and hubris that could blind us to the truth of what we are doing and the harm we could cause to ourselves and others." If anything, history itself should provide sufficient warning. "The last century and a half has been marred by numerous atrocities against vulnerable human beings in the name of progress and medical benefit. In the nineteenth century, vulnerable human beings were bought and sold in the town square as slaves and bred as though they were animals. In this century, the vulnerable were executed mercilessly and subjected to demeaning experimentation at Dachau and Auschwitz. At mid-century, the vulnerable were subjects of our own government's radiation experiments without their knowledge or consent. Likewise, vulnerable African-Americans in Tuskegee, Alabama, were victimized as subjects of a government-sponsored research project to study the effects of syphilis. Currently, we are witness to the gross abuse of mental patients used as subjects in purely experimental research. These experiments were and are driven by a crass utilitarian ethos which results in the creation of a 'sub-class' of human beings, allowing the rights of a few to be sacrificed for the sake of potential benefit to the many." While many scientists tout embryonic stem cell research as the only way to go, other and possibly more medically useful alternatives exist which are not fraught with high moral risk. Other cells have been found to bear some or all of embryonic stem cells' regenerating qualities: hematopoietic (blood cell-producing) stem cells in both adult bone marrow and the placentas of live births, fetal bone marrow from miscarriages, and adult neural stem cells. Of special interest is the discovery of ways to grow clusters of adult stem cells indefinitely without cancerous aberrations, thereby disproving the claim that only embryonic stem cells have the capacity for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"immortality." Already, says the statement, "a growing number of researchers believe that adult stem cells may soon be used to develop treatments for afflictions such as cancer, immune disorders, orthopedic injuries, congestive heart failure, and degenerative diseases. Such researchers are working to further research on adult, rather than embryonic, stem cells." The statement concludes: "We call on Congress to 1) maintain the existing ban against harmful federally funded human embryo research and make explicit its application to stem cell research requiring the destruction of human embryos, and 2) provide federal funding for the development of alternative treatments which do not require the destruction of human embryonic life." Altogether it is an admirably lucid and balanced statement, and I am pleased to be among the many signers. To read the statement in full, visit the website of the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity at www.bioethix.org.

■ Toe the line, or else. The Rev. Charles Sineath, for twenty-two years the senior minister of the five-thousand-member First United Methodist Church of Marietta, Georgia, has been abruptly removed by his bishop, G. Lindsey Davis. His transgression was that First Methodist decided to "redirect" 26 percent of its apportioned contribution to other ministries after a select committee of the church produced a report on the "doctrinal integrity of the United Methodist Church" that expressed particular dissatisfaction with the blessing of same-sex unions in the chapel of Emory University, a Methodist-related school. Good News, a renewal group within United Methodism, notes that, by way of sharpest contrast, other ministers who have presided at same-sex "covenants," in direct violation of church law, have been warmly supported by their bishops. The heavy-handed punishment of the Rev. Sineath, says Good News, "reflects our United Methodist system at its worst."

■ In the larger scheme of things, we must see that ecumenism, the quest for full communion among all Christians, is still in its beginning phases. That is the message of Archbishop Alexander Brunett of Seattle, who has for thirty years been engaged in official Catholic ecumenism and recently offered a tour d'horizon at St. Thomas University in Houston, "The Ecumenical Movement: Where Things Stand." His experience has been in the ecumenical bureaucracy, and that makes understandable his preoccupation with Catholic participation in state and local councils of churches and even with the near-moribund National Council of Churches. Missing is any attention to "the ecumenism of the trenches" in pro-life activism and charismatic renewal, as well as to unofficial developments such as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," which are, in fact, having the most impact on Christian unity today. Nonetheless, Brunett provides a useful overview, including the following suggestion as to how we might think about the ecumenical task itself: "While we can speak of a rich harvest in the ecumenical movement and concrete signposts of progress among our churches, the deepening of communion among our churches is not a linear process. All too often we imagine that the ecumenical movement is made up of straight lines representing each church which are moving toward a point of convergence. I would like to suggest to you that in my experience the ecumenical movement is more like a helix. In this image we are dealing with a linear process that is more of a spiral or a cylinder. At times we seem to approach close to each other and often touch. At other times we seem to have spun farther apart. I would suggest that the image of the helix more adequately describes the process toward unity we are experiencing today. Each time the spirals approach one another, we can see the power and the presence of the Spirit in our midst. The unity of the church is not a human work, responsive to plans and programs of our creation. The unity is the work of the Holy Spirit and in the Holy Spirit's own time."

■ I really don't keep a list of the remarkable sayings of Andrew Sullivan, but occasionally they do leap out and demand attention. For instance, in the *New Republic* he is going on once again about his subject, i.e., homosexuality, and complaining that allegedly neo-Puritan conservatives are obsessed by it. In axiom-making tones he offers something that might be an axiom if it made sense: "When the power of government is brought to bear on such questions as what body parts touched which body parts, the power of government is too great." There go laws against rape. Against battery and assault as well, I suppose. You can see why I do not keep a list of the remarkable sayings of Andrew Sullivan.

■ Uwe Siemon-Netto is a writer in New York who has published extensively on the Reformation, anti-Semitism, and German history. The following letter in response to an item in the *Wall Street Journal* is reprinted as part of our continuing coverage of lawyers chasing the Holocaust ambulance. "In his March 24 Business World column 'Once More Into the Dock with "Nazi" Companies,' Holman W. Jenkins, Jr. writes that 'John Foster Dulles . . . drew up the papers to conceal the true ownership of the U.S. branch of Bosch, the German maker of auto

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parts.' This corporation was in fact the premier financier of the early German resistance against the Nazis. Especially its U.S. branch acted as an efficient agent for Hitler's military and civilian foes. It was industrialist Robert Bosch who in the late 1930s sent Carl Goerdeler, the former mayor of Leipzig, to the U.S. and Britain to warn leaders of Hitler's intentions, which were, in Goerdeler's words, 'first to destroy the Jews, then Christianity, and ultimately capitalism.' Goerdeler went to the gallows in February of 1944. There is a reason why this historical detail is almost unknown: It would suggest that the German resistance was essentially conservative, Christian, upper-class, and much more extensive than it is generally given credit for. To teach these facts would destroy two myths: 1) that the Nazis were right-wing and thus somehow part of the same political spectrum as conservatives (in fact, it can be argued that the Nazis were left-wing revolutionaries); 2) that Germans are generally 'evil,' as evidenced by the alleged absence of a significant opposition to Hitler."

■ Kent Hill, an evangelical Protestant and president of Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy, Mass., notes the number of religious schools that have drifted from their constituting purpose. "The Pope is on the money," says Hill. "You can't have a Catholic school if the majority of the faculty isn't Catholic— and seriously Catholic." Father William Leahy, president of Boston College, disagrees. "We want to be inclusive," he says, adding that Boston College doesn't ask potential faculty members about their religion. As to the proposal that theologians should receive ecclesiastical approval, he says, "Why would we do that? Ordinarily people are hired in a university by institutional leaders and there's no outside group that evaluates a candidate. This is an outside agency that's getting involved in the hiring process. It seems to be at odds with the statement about autonomy." An outside agency—that's an interesting way for a priest and president of a Catholic university to describe the Catholic Church. As to truly outside agencies to which Boston College holds itself accountable and, if Fr. Leahy is to be believed, compromises its autonomy, let me count the ways: There is the American Heart Association, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Comptroller of the Currency, the Library of Congress, the U.S. Army and Navy, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, and the National Institutes of Health, to name a few. (For a fuller list of "outside agencies" that presumably do not violate the "autonomy" of church-related universities, see Fr. James Burtchaell in the August/September Public Square.)

■ *Christianity Today* takes sympathetic note of the remarkable rise in the popularity of fasting among evangelical Protestants, especially young people. But the editors are concerned that some of the fasting enthusiasts seem to have a utilitarian attitude to the practice, always looking for what it "achieves" in measurable terms, whether material or spiritual. And they have another worry: "A second concern is the way in which this current movement seems to confuse church and society. Admittedly, this problem stems from a long tradition of viewing the United States as essentially a Christian country. Thus one prominent leader engages in the rhetoric of national decline—of 'militant homosexuals parad[ing] half-naked down [our] streets' and of police 'arresting those who peacefully try to stop the bloodshed' of abortion. And after this colorful recital he posits the solution: revival for America. This sounds appealing, but as we understand it, revival is something that happens to the Church, it is the spiritual enlivening of a spiritually somnolent body of believers, it is (in Whitfield's terms) something that turns 'almost Christians' into 'altogether Christians.' Among the fasters today, 2 Chronicles 7:14 is much cited: 'If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.'" But, say the editors, Christians today need to be reminded that the Church has no land to call its own. The conclusion: "So fast indeed in sorrow over this country's sharp moral decline, but do not confuse the Church with America or revival with the reformation of manners and morals." They should not be confused, and certainly should not be conflated, but neither, one may be permitted to think, are they entirely unrelated.

■ A big new study of Catholic young adults has come up with some encouraging (for the most part) findings. The study was conducted by sociologists Mary Johnson, Dean Hoge, William Dinges, and Juan Gonzales, and contrasts sharply with findings about young adults in mainline Protestantism (see Dean R. Hoge, "Mainline Churches: The Real Reason for Decline," FT, March 1993). Seventy-five percent of non-Latino Catholic young adults say, "I cannot imagine myself being anything other than Catholic," while 81 percent of Latinos agree. A few years ago there was much discussion of a claim that only one-third of Catholics believe in the Real

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Presence in the Eucharist. According to the new study, 87 percent of non-Latinos and 95 percent of Latinos agree with the statement that "in Mass the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ." Ninety-one percent of non-Latinos and 96 percent of Latinos say that Jesus is God or the Son of God. The overwhelming majority of young adults also support Catholic social doctrine as expressed in generalizations such as "Catholics have a duty to try to end racism" and "Catholics have a duty to try to close the gap between the rich and the poor." Interestingly, a majority also agrees with the statement, "An individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any churches or synagogues." This suggests that they believe that they have independently arrived at agreement with the teachings of the Catholic Church, which may not be a bad thing.

■ Most Egyptian Christians today are members of the Coptic Orthodox Church, also known as the Church of St. Mark after its evangelist founder and as the Alexandrian Church after the historic seat of its patriarch. At six to ten million members, it is the largest Christian community in the Middle East, and its location in deeply Muslim Egypt makes its presence all the more significant. Apparently the Egyptian Muslims recognize this fact too, because the persecution of Christians continues to this day, according to a recent report by Freedom House. In addition to the well-known terrorist assaults, Egyptian Christians live in fear of coerced conversion by the local police and government-endorsed discrimination against Coptic churches, families, clergy, and education. For the report *Egypt's Endangered Christians 1999*, write to the Center for Religious Freedom, 1319 18th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

■ Writing in *Commentary*, Daniel Pipes, director of the Middle East Forum, makes the requisite acknowledgment that most Muslims in the United States are law-abiding folk who have nothing to do with terrorism. But he cites a long list of incidents over recent years in support of his title "America's Muslims Against America's Jews," and observes: "In other words, what was historically a Christian phenomenon is now primarily a Muslim phenomenon. If Christian anti-Semitism is increasingly yesterday's problem, Muslim anti-Semitism is today's problem, and tomorrow's." Pipes notes a book on Louis Farrakhan by Florence Hamlish Levinsohn which explains his anti-Semitism exclusively in terms of his Christian background. Pipes thinks this thoroughly wrongheaded and concludes: "The Anti-Defamation League, even while valiantly leading the fight against Farrakhan's anti-Jewish racism, sedulously avoids mentioning its religious context. Worst of all, many American Jewish organizations continue to devote considerable resources and energy to targeting the 'Christian Right,' while virtually ignoring the rise of Islamist fascism. But whatever one thinks of the causes favored by the Christian Right—educational vouchers, school prayer, the display of religious symbols in public places, even the rollback of *Roe v. Wade*—they hardly constitute the most serious threat to the security of Jews in the United States today. The real and present danger is by no means the pro-Israel Christian Coalition but the rabidly anti-Semitic Muslim Arab Youth Association; not Jerry Falwell but Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman; not those who wish, at the very worst, to convert Jews but those who, with every means at their disposal, intend to do them harm, who have already acted on those violent intentions, and who if unchecked will surely do so again." For Jews, Christians, and everyone else, one of the difficult and delicate tasks of our time is to cultivate a dialogue with Islam that is undeluded about the distinctly undialogical dynamics that concern Daniel Pipes and many others.

■ Dr. Joel Brind has been trying to get the facts about the links between abortion and breast cancer (ABC) out into the open for some time now, including in these pages ("Abortion, Breast Cancer, and Ideology," FT, May 1997). The evidence is confirmed again and again by medical studies: twenty-five out of thirty-one studies worldwide and eleven out of twelve in the U.S. demonstrate a correlation between the two. One study found that a woman who had had one abortion increased her risk of breast cancer by 190 percent; two abortions upped the risk to 260 percent. But, writes Brind in the *National Right to Life News*, there are "troubling signs that more evidence of the ABC link has managed somehow not to appear in published studies on breast cancer risk factors. This new absence is very significant, for it includes studies coming from prominent researchers publishing in prominent medical journals." When it comes to reporting on science, it appears that the rule is "all the news that fits our biases."

■ Ralph McInerny teaches philosophy at Notre Dame and is a Thomist of the strict observance. He wrote a little piece in the *Wall Street Journal* suggesting that John Paul II's aversion to capital punishment should not be confused with the authoritative teaching of the Church. That, in turn, prompted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attacks in *Our Sunday Visitor* on conservative Catholics who "dissent" from magisterial authority. One attack was on Robert Royal, who had opined with respect to U.S. policy toward Iraq, "For the Pope to say war does not solve problems is an unguarded way of phrasing it." His point was that some wars do solve some problems. That is not a dissent. That is an editorial suggestion. Stylistic precision and felicity in every locution is not among the guaranteed charisms attending the papal office. As for Professor McInerny, he correctly notes: "The Holy Father, like the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, is careful to point out that the state has the right to exact capital punishment. In this, nothing has changed." There is development of doctrine with respect to the exercise of that right when it is not absolutely necessary to defend society. After the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, which authoritatively signaled such a development, some Catholic writers and academics who had strongly supported capital punishment turned on a dime to oppose it. I expect that part of McInerny's purpose in the *Wall Street Journal* article was to indicate that his mind doesn't work that way. His way of thinking is, if you will, more developmental. His judgment is not in doubt: "While I accept the teaching of the Catholic Church that capital punishment is sometimes justified, I do not think that this country, which alas deserves the appellation 'culture of death' and has so much innocent blood on its hands, should avail itself of that penalty. If the magisterium should ever teach that capital punishment is morally evil"—a prospect he considers highly improbable—"I will be the first to give his assent." Prof. McInerny is not a dissenter. As Cardinal Newman observed, a thousand difficulties do not add up to a doubt—never mind a dissent.

■ In *Secularism, Spirituality, and the Future of American Jewry*, editors Elliott Abrams and David G. Dalin have gathered together an excellent assortment of thought-provoking essays on the prospects of the Jewish community in America in the years ahead. Specifically they reflect on the role of the synagogue as a focal point for reinstating the love of Torah and holiness as the center of Judaism. Likewise there is some critical reflection on the Jewish "civil religion" which prefers emphasis on political agendas, the Holocaust, and the state of Israel to theological inquiry and obedience to the law. To obtain a copy, write to the Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1015 15th St. NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20005.

■ When the chemotherapy that produced side effects of vomiting, lesions, and infections failed, Tyrell Dueck and his parents decided that they'd had enough of conventional medicine. But the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench disagreed with their choice to switch to a form of alternative, "holistic" medicine in Mexico. Better that the thirteen-year-old Tyrell go back for more of the vomiting, lesions, and infections to cure his bone cancer. The dispute centered on Tyrell's status as a minor. Had he been declared by the court a "mature minor," he would have been permitted to make his own decisions about weighty matters such as health care. However, according to Madam Justice Rothery and various "child behavior experts," Tyrell could not be considered mature because he respected his parents and shared their religious convictions. Madam Justice explained: "He is a boy deeply under the influence of his father. . . . Tyrell has been misguided by his father into placing his hopes for recovery on a cure that does not exist. This is simply cruelty to Tyrell." Even more cruel, apparently, than insisting on the medical care that was making Tyrell worse instead of better. Ian Hunter, writing in the *National Post*, cites an analogous case, that of the Wagstaffes in 1868. They were accused of manslaughter after the death of their fourteen-month-old son, whose illness they had treated by prayer and anointing in accordance with their religious convictions. Dr. Donoghue, a leading surgeon of the day who performed the autopsy, claimed that, had the parents obtained sound medical care, they could have prevented their son's death. The doctor pronounced: "The child should have been leeched in the first instance, and small doses of antimonial wine administered." This, of course, was sound medical advice in 1868. The judge was unimpressed by the doctor's expertise and duly impressed by the parents' faith, so he acquitted the Wagstaffes. Apparently there was a time when the law assumed that parents have their children's best interests in mind, even when their minds are influenced by religion. In any event, the Tyrell Dueck case was closed when the Canadian doctors deemed that Tyrell's bone cancer was incurable and had spread to his lungs. Tyrell died peacefully in a Saskatchewan hospice two months later.

■ Recriminations about what was done in the distant past can further compound the corruptions of history, as is evident in the money-chasing lawyers seeking enormous compensations for the long-gone victims of the Holocaust (see "Grasping for the Gold," Public Square, November 1998). At the same time, anything approximating a hope for moral renewal in history requires that slates be cleared, preferably not by self-righteous accusations but by the candid admission of guilt by those who did wrong. For many

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

years to come, we will be sorting out who did what and who should have done what in the long Cold War. It is one thing to call for honesty and quite another to offer an example of honesty that might inspire others. That is what Orthodox Archbishop Nicolae Corneanu of Timisoara, Romania, did in a recent interview on the eve of John Paul II's visit to that country, the first by a Pope to a predominantly Orthodox country in more than a thousand years. Corneanu was appointed bishop in 1962 under the brutally repressive Ceaucescu regime, which persecuted all Christians but especially the Greek Catholics of Romania who are in communion with Rome. Thousands of Greek Catholic church properties were handed over to the more compliant Orthodox and have still to be returned. In the interview Archbishop Corneanu said: "At that time, it was not possible to hold a position contrary to that of the dictatorship: you either accepted being condemned, leaving the diocese and resigning from the episcopate, or you compromised with the existing power. The position of the Orthodox Church was to accept matters as they were with the conviction that the Communist regime would be in power for many more years. I was among those who accepted to collaborate with the existing power." He added: "This is a burden on me, a stone slab. I am very unhappy with what I did at times during that period." His admission of guilt does not stop at generalities. Archbishop Corneanu, who at present is a member of a mixed commission studying the property problems of the different churches, is very precise in enumerating his errors. "Many priests and faithful were jailed while I was bishop. Some of my priests protested against the dictatorship and were persecuted. I did not protect them. Many of the faithful were condemned by civil courts because they were opposed to the regime. I made no effort to defend them. For all these things I was in conflict with my own conscience. I did not fulfill my task as bishop because I did not protest against the regime. I have committed errors and I now feel the need to confess them. I am a critic of the posture of the Orthodox Church since 1948. It is true we have done some positive things, but we have also done negative things. Why not tell the truth?" Exactly. It will take a long time to untangle the story of religion in the Cold War, including the role of institutions such as the World Council of Churches in defending collaboration with the evil empire, but the example of Archbishop Corneanu provides hope that it can be done.

■ Several alert readers sent clippings from a British newspaper reporting that the U.S. military had appointed chaplains for the witches associated with the Wiccan Church. We asked Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, head of Catholic chaplaincies, about it and he sent along a lengthy statement issued by the Department of Defense (DoD). It seems that one Wiccan Church has requested "ecclesiastical endorsing status," which is required for the appointment of chaplains to a religious group, but no decision has been made on the request to date. The statement includes this: "Every military chaplain, regardless of denomination, has an obligation to minister to or facilitate the faith needs of all servicemembers, regardless of denomination." When it comes to members of a Wicca coven one might suggest that the paramount "faith need" is conversion, but that is probably not what DoD has in mind.

■ On his pilgrimage to Poland in June, John Paul II surprised everyone and worried some by insisting upon resuming his schedule, and even adding to it, after being laid low by a fever. Sister Eufrosia, one of the Polish nuns attending to domestic affairs, was overheard saying, "I am worried about Your Holiness." To which the Pope responded, "I, too, am worried about my holiness."

■ In an article on religion scholars who are enamored of "rational choice" theory ("Yeah, But What Was In It for Mother Teresa?" Public Square, February), I wrote that Professor Mark Chaves of the University of Arizona is among their number. That's not quite right. In fact, it's wrong. He is a critic of the theory. I was taking the word of another scholar who implied that Prof. Chaves is one of them. In any event, Prof. Chaves has written a very useful essay, "On the Rational Choice Approach to Religion," in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1995: 34.1), which readers may wish to consult. My apologies to Prof. Chaves, whose choice not to be a rational choice theorist strikes me as eminently rational.

■ With all the controversy—fully warranted controversy, let it be said—over the appointment of Peter Singer at Princeton, we would be remiss to overlook the appointment of Robert P. George as McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence. Prof. George, a frequent contributor to this journal and a member of our Advisory Board, is the sixth person to hold this chair, which is one of the most distinguished endowed professorships in the American academy. Prior occupants include Woodrow Wilson (1897-1912) and the legendary constitutional scholar Edward S. Corwin (1918-1946). Our warmest congratulations to Prof. George on this well deserved honor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

■ In the June/July issue, I urged the Illinois Bar Association to stand firm in rejecting the application of a Matthew Hale because, among other things, he is a white supremacist and great fan of Hitler who wants to be a lawyer so he can better promote his hateful views. The bar association said Mr. Hale fails the "character and fitness" test. A thoughtful reader, also a lawyer, takes respectful exception to my saying that a line must be drawn and that the bar association drew it at the right place. The thoughtful reader notes that the American Bar Association and its state affiliates are increasingly imposing ideological tests related to gender, race, ethnic fairness, sexual orientation, and other lines of legal correctness in order to stifle genuine diversity and dissent. He writes: "I think that there will be a low-grade pressure to conform to the prevailing beliefs of the powers that be, and a slow but steady process of relegating dissenting views to the margins at first, and then casting them beyond the pale. That process is already happening in academia and it does not promise much in the way of tolerance for religious views. . . . For all our faults, I think lawyers are made of sterner stuff than academics . . . but the purveyors of political correctness are nothing if not relentless, the positions of orthodox Christians and Jews are hostile to their worldview, and it is only a lack of power, not of will, that keeps them from proscribing such views. To put it another way, I think the battle must be fought here. Once we give administrative organizations the power to deny professional credentials based on the substance of an applicant's individual beliefs we will be unable to draw a principled distinction between those beliefs that may be condemned and those that are beyond scrutiny. So, yes, I would let Matthew Hale be a lawyer despite his Nazi views. I doubt that he will have much of a practice—there aren't many KKK members who need to be defended on cross-burning charges any more, and not many of them will be able to afford much in the way of a legal fee—but I think that it is better, and safer, to let Hale practice law than it is to give the Illinois State Bar Association the power to decide which views may be banned." That is an argument much worth pondering. On the other hand, it seems to me that this is not the time in our national life when we want to be abandoning standards, especially standards regarding character and fitness. Recall the disputes over "speech codes" on campuses, and how conservatives typically opposed them, ending up by appearing to be the advocates of vulgarity and libertinism. The dispute should have been not over whether there are standards but what those standards ought to be. For instance, it should be clearly recognized that it is false, hateful, and worthy of censure to call people sexist because they say that there are inherent and important differences between the sexes, and that those differences should be respected. Similarly, everyone should understand that those who disapprove of homosexuality are not to be condemned as homophobic. In short, the answer to the wrong standards that some would impose is not no standards but the right standards. The alternative is to give up on standards. The thoughtful reader's objections notwithstanding, the line drawn by the Illinois Bar Association strikes me as eminently defensible. Of course there are dangers in "the power to decide which views may be banned." They should be addressed one line at a time, recognizing, as G. K. Chesterton observed, that all moral judgment finally comes down to a matter of drawing a line. (Since the above was written, it is reported that Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, a white supremacist follower of Matthew Hale, went on a shooting spree in Chicago, targeting blacks, Orthodox Jews, and Asians. There are two dead and nine wounded.)

■ I do hold it against Vice President Al Gore that he invented the Internet. For one thing, it makes me vulnerable to people by whom I would just as soon not be accessed, thank you. For another it spills into the air all kinds of things that you just know cannot be so. For instance, here is a report that the Catholic bishops of the Pacific Northwest are getting ready to commit a pastoral statement in praise of Mother Nature and how we human beings have been so very mean to her. The draft text that accompanies the report has the bishops urging us to confess "the sin of speciesism," and you just know that they can't be agreeing with the infamous Peter Singer of Princeton that it is wrong to suggest that people are inherently superior to the salmon. It is perhaps noteworthy that there is no known instance of a salmon coming up with such an idea. That the report is a manifest fraud is evident also in the long—I mean very long—dribbling of doggerel, titled "Riversong," that accompanies the draft text. This exercise in eco-ecstasy begins with

> *In the beginning was the Word,*
> *and the creative Word brought forth the cosmos.*

Then things really get going as the great Columbia river is surrounded

> *by the cries of the birds*
> *the eagle and owl,*
> *merganser and magpie,*
> *osprey and raven*
> *and other winged people.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The bishops, according to what it says here, take flight in deploring what people have done as "the Earth was transformed" by everything from lumbering to "atom-based plants" and "aluminum plants for new airplanes." But they dream of a new day when

> *the peoples of the sky, the land and the waters lived each in relation to all and to Earth . . .*
>
> *new energy sources soon came into being, that worked with Earth's energy, sunlight, and wind . . .*
>
> *eco-justice, eco-consciousness walked hand in hand,*
> *and communities called themselves neighbors again.*

It goes on and on like that. Whoever is responsible for spreading the word that Catholic bishops could associate themselves with such dopiness that tries but fails to rise to the dignity of heresy should be ashamed of himself. At the same time, one cannot entirely shake the suspicion that the report just may be true. That's another thing about the Internet.

■ In response to widespread protest against Princeton's appointment of Peter Singer to a chair in ethics, President Harold T. Shapiro devotes "The President's Page" of the *Alumni Review* to defending the proposition that "while Professor Singer may engender more public controversy than many members of our faculty, the qualities of honesty, rigor, creativity, and commitment that he brings to his scholarship and his teaching are qualities that we prize throughout our faculty—qualities that are central to Princeton's continuing eminence as one of the world's leading universities." Precisely because Princeton is one of the world's leading universities, there is outrage at the appointment of someone who advocates the views for which Singer has become infamous. To protesting alumni, Dr. Shapiro sends a "clarifying" statement by Singer in which he reiterates his support for an extended waiting period after birth during which parents can decide to kill handicapped children, and in which he again states that, in weighing the relative merit of lives, "species membership in itself is not the determining factor," and therefore an animal with "a capacity for sentience" is of greater value than human beings without such capacity. To their credit, some Princeton students have been protesting the Singer appointment. To which the editors of the *Daily Princetonian* respond that Singer "has been appointed to challenge students to consider their own opinions about the most fundamental issues of life and death. Even though classes may read *Mein Kampf* or study Karl Marx, this does not suggest that the University supports Nazism or communism." The analogies are apt. And if a professor defends and advocates what Hitler or Stalin did? The fatuous appeal to academic freedom and openness will not wash, and I admit to being astonished that Dr. Shapiro sends out the student editorial in defense of his decision. German universities, where the memory of the consequences of the position that Peter Singer promotes is somewhat more vivid, have rightly refused him a platform. Princeton has brought great shame upon itself by this morally odious appointment.

■ "Who is to guard the guards themselves?" (*Sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*), asked Juvenal in the first century, and the question has been a staple of political philosophy ever since. In the publishing business the question is, Who is to endorse the endorsers themselves? Here is the lead of an advertisement for the *New York Review of Books*: "Subscribe to the 'leading intellectual journal in the U.S.'—*Esquire* magazine." *Esquire* an arbiter of intellectual distinction?

■ It's Rome or California. At least that's the way the late Walker Percy put it some years ago in a letter to the editors of *Commonweal* recently sent me by an alert reader in Virginia. Percy objected to the editors' "obligatory hostility to 'Rome.'" Complaining about interference from Rome and especially about John Paul II, said Percy, "has apparently come to be the new *Commonweal* line." (Remember this was 1990.) Percy wrote: "These issues could be debated, as indeed they often are, but here's how it appears to one novelist. If such attacks continue and are successful, the result will be pleasing mainly to the secular liberal establishment, who are in fact calling the shots, and destructive and divisive to the Catholic people. This novelist can only observe that if the magisterium and the sacramental orthodoxy of the Church are compromised in the name of 'creative pluralism' or suchlike, there may be a lot of hugging and kissing and good feeling going on, but there won't be any Catholic novelists around. For these odd fellows are turned on precisely by these claims of the Church, breathtaking in their singularity and exclusivity, i.e., the magisterium and the Eucharist, and how these have endured with the people of God through these kinds of thicks and thins for two thousand years. And they will endure despite these chic brush-offs of 'Rome.' Get rid of 'Rome' and what will be left in the end is California." The last line is, I think, worthy of being emblazoned over the desks of editors and theologians.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

■ I see that the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, publisher of *Cross Currents*, is sponsoring a conference up at Columbia on how to stop being a consumer and become a citizen. Keynote speakers are Larry Parks Daloz and Sharon Daloz Parks, who are described as "colleagues." For some reason, I expect they're more than that to one another. Spouses, for instance, or maybe even, if I may risk the offensive terminology, husband and wife. One cannot help but wonder what the cross-naming will look like when carried unto the third and fourth generation.

■ *RealAge: Are You as Young as You Can Be?* by Michael F. Roizen, M.D., gets a full page ad in the *New York Times*. The book offers "scientifically proven steps" that help you to "live and feel twenty-six years younger." Among the prescriptions: Take an aspirin a day, drink a glass of red wine, and eat lots of tomato paste to prevent prostate cancer. Then there is this: "Flossing teeth daily makes your RealAge 6.4 years younger." Followed by this: "A happy sex life can make your RealAge as much as 6 years younger." Flossing beats sex! Note, too, that the claim for flossing is absolute while for sex it is conditional. Lord Chesterfield, call your office. Of course in flossing the position is a little bit ridiculous, but you're the only one there to notice. Admittedly, the pleasure is not even momentary, but the cost is next to nothing. In Brooklyn I had a mild little parishioner who died at age ninety-three. He had received slight recognition for his achievements in life, such as they were, but on his living room wall was framed a certificate from his dentist, "For Exceptional Flossing Between Appointments." Only now do I see that he was a man ahead of his time.

Sources: Cardinal Hume interview, *National Catholic Reporter*, July 2, 1999. On institutional "faith alone," James Pinkerton and Michael Horowitz in *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1999. Francis Fukuyama's *The Great Disruption* reviewed by Gertrude Himmelfarb, *National Interest*, Summer 1999.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: David Brooks on the idea of restoration, *New Yorker*, January 25, 1999. On Paul Griffiths and his article "How Epistemology Matters to Theology," *Journal of Religion*, January 1999. "Who Needs the Stigma of Affirmative Action?" by Linda Chavez, *Chicago Tribune*, February 3, 1999. "Will Humans Overwhelm the Earth? The Debate Continues" in *New York Times*, December 8, 1998. On the Rev. Charles Sineath, Good News press release, March 11, 1999. Archbishop Alexander Brunett on ecumenism, *Origins*, March 18, 1999. Andrew Sullivan on laws concerning sex, *New Republic*, March 8, 1999. Uwe Siemon-Netto on German resistance to Hitler, *Wall Street Journal*, March 29, 1999. On Catholic colleges, *Patriot Ledger* (Quincy, Mass.), March 24, 1999. On fasting, *Christianity Today*, April 5, 1999. On study of Catholic young adults, *America*, March 27, 1999. "America's Muslims Against America's Jews" by Daniel Pipes in *Commentary*, May 1999. On the abortion/breast cancer link, "Additional Evidence of Link Somehow Not Appearing in Published Studies," by Dr. Joel Brind, *National Right to Life News*, November 17, 1998. Ralph McInerny on capital punishment, *Wall Street Journal*, February 26, 1999; criticism in *Our Sunday Visitor*, April 4, 1999, and McInerny response, April 25, 1999. On Tyrell Dueck, *National Post*, April 15, 1999. Archbishop Nicolae Corneanu quoted by ZENIT news service, May 6, 1999. On John Paul II and Polish nun, ZENIT news agency, June 18, 1999. Harold T. Shapiro on Peter Singer, *Alumni Weekly*, December 2, 1998; *Daily Princetonian* editorial, April 2, 1999. Walker Percy letter to *Commonweal*, January 26, 1990. Ad for the book *RealAge* in *New York Times*, March 16, 1999.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

PUBLICATIONS

CanticaNOVA Publications—"Traditional Music for the Contemporary Church." Catalog: cup@uplink.net http://home.earthlink.net/~canticanova. PO Box 10344, State College, PA 168040344. (814) 237-0463.

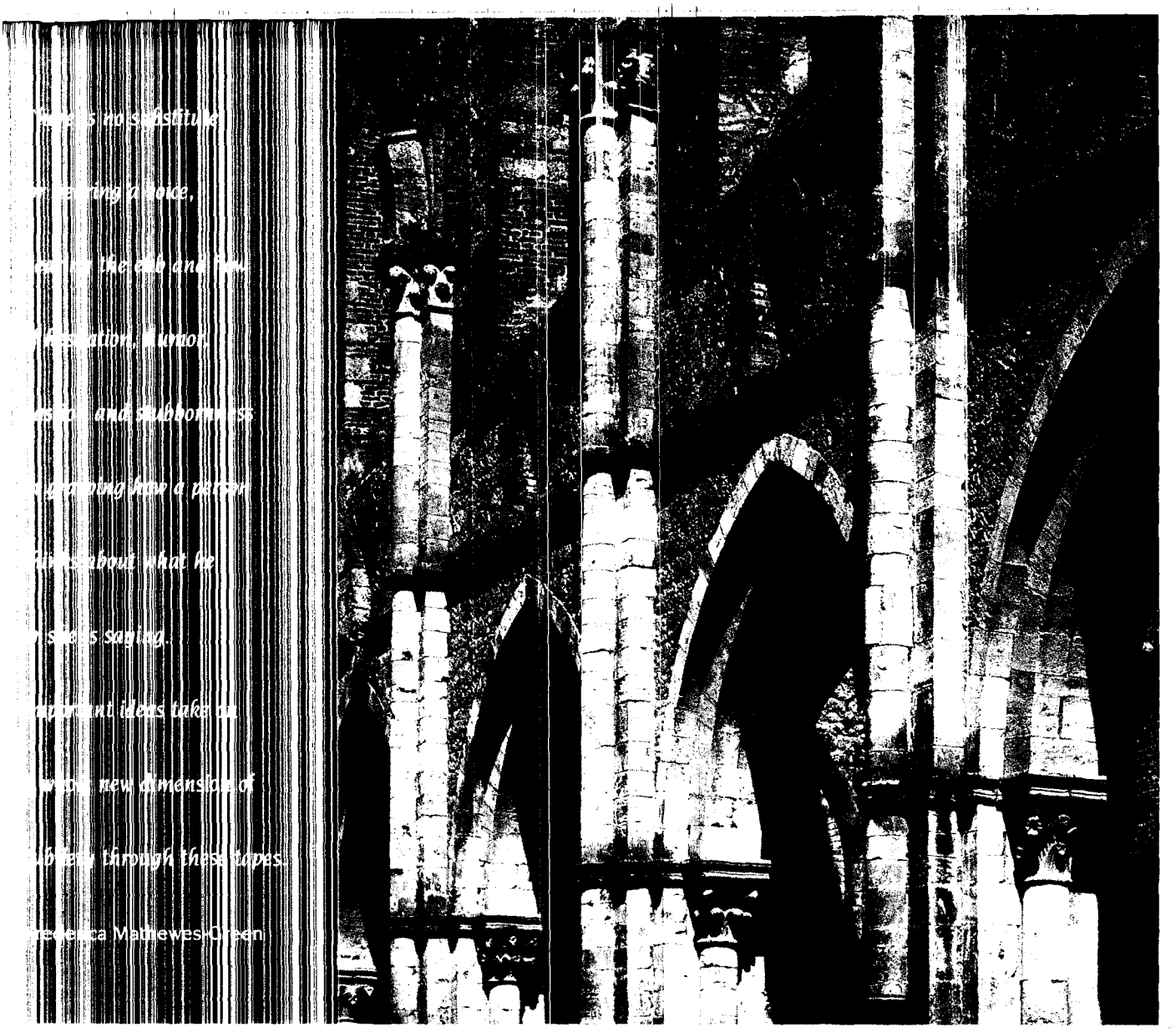
INTERNET SITE

The Catholic Family Catalog–The resource for Catholic merchandise! (www.pray4usa.com.)

EMPLOYMENT

Accounting Faculty Position, Waynesburg College–search reopened (available January 2000 or fall 2000): teaching tax, auditing, accounting information systems; master's (or JD) required, CPA and experience in forensic accounting or fraud investigation preferred; primarily undergraduate courses with possibility of MBA teaching. Requires commitment to Christian higher education, breadth of teaching skills, plus normal full-time faculty responsibilities. Send CV, copies of transcripts, letter addressing qualifications and philosophy of education, and three references to Richard Stanislaw, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Waynesburg College, Waynesburg, PA 15370 or rstanisl@waynesburg.edu. See homepage at http://waynesburg.edu for this and other opportunities. Waynesburg College is an affiliate member of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



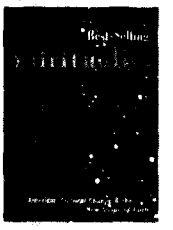
MARS HILL AUDIO

MARS HILL AUDIO *Journal*
A bi-monthly audio magazine of contemporary culture and Christian conversation. Hosted by Ken Myers, formerly a senior editor at National Public Radio.

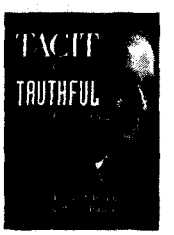
36

MARS HILL AUDIO *Anthologies*
Thoughtful and engaging essays on a single subject, recorded onto one cassette tape.

2



Best-Selling Spirituality: American Cultural Change and the New Shape of Faith (2-hour audio program)
An arresting portrait of the religious sensibilities of a post-Christian society.

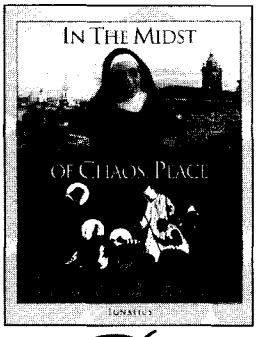


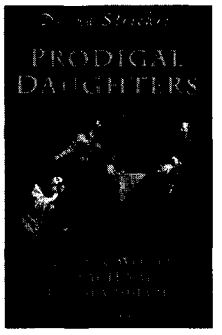
Tacit Knowing, Truthful Knowing: The Life and Thought of Michael Polanyi (2 1/2-hour audio program)
An admiring look at one of this century's most influential thinkers and his insights into human knowledge.

Call 1.800.331.6407 for a catalog of all our audio resources

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS THAT INFORM & INSPIRE





IN THE MIDST OF CHAOS, PEACE

Sister Wendy Beckett, Dan Paulos, Sister Mary Dorcy

Famed BBC art critic Sister Wendy Beckett provides profound meditations for 54 stunning original silhouettes of Jesus and Mary by the two foremost Catholic paper-cutting artists Paulos and Dorcy. The result is what Sister Wendy calls "an epiphany", a book that reveals the God of mercy, love and peace through deeply inspired art and reflections.

0-89870-764-1, Sewn Hardcover, $19.95

CHARLES DE FOUCAULD

Jean-Jacques Antier

A renowned French author presents the definitive biography of the great modern holy man and monk of the African desert, Charles de Foucauld. Given access to the complete Vatican archives for Foucauld's beatification, Antier presents a powerful portrait of the former French playboy who became the the "Saint of the Sahara". *Illustrated.*

0-89870-756-0, Sewn Softcover, $17.95

CALLED TO HOLINESS

Ralph Martin

What does it mean to encounter the living God? How can such an encounter transform our lives and make us holy as He is holy? Ralph Martin challenges us to know God more profoundly by experiencing His holy presence at work in our daily life. Drawing upon Scripture, Martin describes the consuming fire of God's holiness.

0-89870-755-2, Sewn Softcover, $10.95

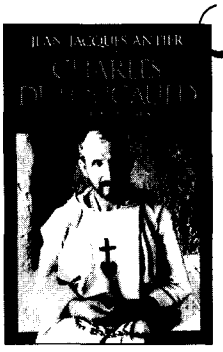
THE EVIDENTIAL POWER OF BEAUTY

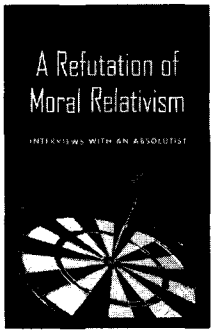
Fr. Thomas Dubay, S.M.

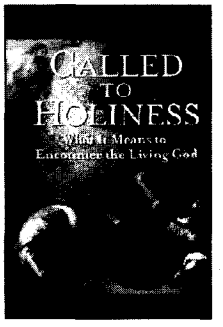
Dubay, author of *Fire Within*, brings together science, theology and daily experience in this profound study of the power of beauty as a standard for recognizing God's revealed truth. An inspiring, uplifting book proving why modern scientists agree with Keat's, "Beauty is truth, truth is beauty."

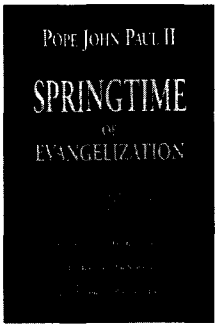
"The most complete theology of beauty in one volume – it vastly expands our understanding." —*Peter Kreeft*

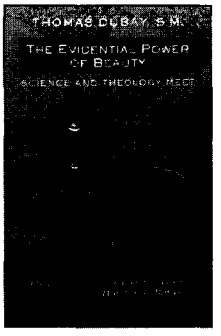
0-89870-752-8, Sewn Softcover, $14.95

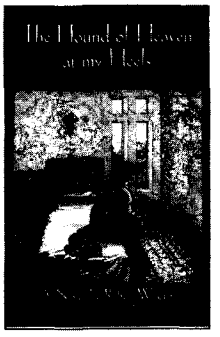












PRODIGAL DAUGHTERS

Donna Steichen

Like their prodigal brother in the best-loved of Christ's parables, seventeen women from all walks of life tell their poignant personal stories of leaving the Catholic Church and why they came back. They rediscovered the living heart of Christ at the center of the Church and their accounts of faith reborn offer hope and direction to lift the heart of every reader.

0-89870-732-3, Sewn Softcover, $14.95

A REFUTATION OF MORAL RELATIVISM

Peter Kreeft

The popular Kreeft uses a series of engaging and entertaining fictional interviews between a moral relativist and an absolutist to refute arguments of moral relativism. A zesty mix of logic and humor that gives a solid defense of moral absolutes and a devastating critique of relativism.

0-89870-731-5, Sewn Softcover, $12.95

SPRINGTIME OF EVANGELIZATION

Pope John Paul II

The complete texts of the Pope's addresses to American Catholics on many critical issues that offers his compelling and practical advice for renewing faith and culture in the U.S. on the eve of the third millennium — powerful insights to help all Catholics to embrace this key moment.

"A stunning proposal for the Church in the U.S." —***Fr. Richard Neuhaus***

0-89870-769-2, Softcover, $14.95

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN AT MY HEELS

Robert Waldron

A fictional retelling of the story of famed poet Francis Thompson, and of his struggle to overcome drug addiction. A poignant novel that reveals Thompson's poetic genius and his profound spiritual renewal.

"A haunting book written with immense skill that opens you out onto the very heaven of heavens." — ***Thomas Howard***

0-89870-745-5, Sewn Softcover, $8.95

ignatius press

PO BOX 1339, FT. COLLINS, CO 80522 • 1-800-651-1531 • WWW.IGNATIUS.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED